

*Count Hermann Keyserling*

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FROM SUFFERING  
TO FULFILMENT

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Translated by  
JANE MARSHALL

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SELWYN & BLOUNT, PATERNOSTER HOUSE  
PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4

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Made and Printed in Great Britain at  
*The Mayflower Press, Plymouth.* William Brendon & Son, Ltd  
1938

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## FOREWORD

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*In the corpus of my work the three books, Problems of Personal Life, La Révolution Mondiale et La Responsabilité de L'Esprit, and the later one, The Art of Life, books which I wrote originally in French, and which from their first conception were intended to be read by Latins, form exceptions which do not fall wholly within the general scheme of my activity. In all my other works the germinal idea of the book has been a far-reaching synthesis, which was afterwards divided up into specialized studies, the whole existing before the parts. In my three French books I have gone to work from the other end: chapter by chapter I have analysed special problems, each time condensing them as much as possible, and even in the last chapter not giving any synthesis proper. That chapter only opens up the farthest horizons discernible from the original starting-point: without closing the circle, it leaves to the reader the task of either reaching the final synthesis himself, or else seeking for it in my other works of a synthetic character. This original difference in conception has had two results in particular. First, it is impossible for me to bring my three French books into the series of my German ones, so impossible that I have given up any idea of having them translated into German, and, when occasion has arisen for dealing with the same problems for Germans I have treated them quite afresh. The second result is this: if I continue to devote attention, in German this time, to problems called to life in me by an inspiration which at first took shape in French, it proves impossible to translate the German book which results into French as it stands. It would contain too many repetitions, too many developments useless from the standpoint of*

*the French mind, too many special reflections which have no importance except for Germans.*

*This is the case with my last large German work, Das Buch vom persönlichen Leben (The Book of the Personal Life), which runs to nearly 700 pages quarto, written for the most part at the same time, and appearing in the same year, as The Art of Life. It sprang from the same inspiration as Problems of Personal Life: it treats at length, and in every chapter, of the primacy of the inner life over all life which is collective, objective, and externalized. It, too, endeavours first of all to show that the main problem of our time is to re-personalize life. But it does so in the spacious setting of a quasi-complete anthropology, and of a synthesis which embraces the cosmos in its entirety—a setting like that of all my large philosophical works. In each particular case it starts from the universal, and only troubles about the particular in so far as the latter is, or may be, the exponent or illustration of the universal. It is, then, in no way a 'proximist essay' such as Problems of Personal Life is in essence. Thanks to this entirely different setting, I have been able to resume in this large German work the greater part of the considerations and reflexions contained in Problems of Personal Life, but from quite a different point of view, since I was meditating inserting each of them in a comprehensive final synthesis, and also with much greater fullness. I have also been able to resume, in a new way, the greater part of the reflexions on principles contained in La Révolution Mondiale and The Art of Life. Finally, seeing that in the German book what is intimate is directly and inseparably bound up with the universal, I have been able in it to approach those problems of the inner life which fall outside the plan of the French book appearing under a similar title. The chapters and parts of chapters which connect what is intimate with the universal in the scheme of a vast constructive whole are entirely unpublished in French. I think the numerous public which does not know German is entitled to have them. But how to make of them a French book which would hang together, which would have a style of its own, which would be convincing and something more than a patchwork of fragments? That is the question which I only succeeded in resolving after mature consideration.*

*What had to be done, first of all, was to analyse the German book in such a way that each chapter could stand by itself, like those of my French books. To put it otherwise, I had to undo the synthesis which made each chapter an organ not to be detached from a pre-existent whole, and to give to the new French book the same rhythm as the books written in that language from the first : to analyse special problems chapter by chapter, making them as concentrated as possible, and not making even the last give a synthesis properly so-called, but only opening up the farthest horizons discernible from the original starting-point. In the second place, I had to put the materials of the German book together again, in such a way that they would form a direct sequel to Problems of Personal Life, making a new book which would raise the general problem of man's inner life above the 'proximist' level, and bring it within the framework of the cosmos in its entirety. For Man's destiny and condition clearly form one body with the universal destiny? Thanks to my French translator M. Jean Paul de Dadelsen, and to my French publisher and trusty friend Maurice Delamain, who have given me the benefit of their invaluable advice, I think I have succeeded in this undertaking. The three chapters of the original German book which deal with Solitude, Suffering, and Freedom, all three standing independently, did to form the kernel of the new French book ; they went into it without any changes worthy of note. What remained to be done was to compose in French, for the sake of French readers, an introduction which should state the problem of the new book, a first chapter entitled Truthfulness, and a concluding one. The first chapter had to link up the present volume with Problems of Personal Life and to indicate the transition from the 'proximist' treatment of the problem to the universalist ; the last one had to give a conclusion to the same effect as—but on a much higher level and taking in far wider horizons than—the chapter 'Reason and Religion' with which Problems of Personal Life concludes.*

*It is clear that in the course of this very thorough remodelling sacrifices were inevitable ; but I had to impose similar sacrifices on my German readers, for evidently much of what my French books contained could not find a place in my new German one.*

*However, thanks to the plan adopted here, it has been possible to reduce these sacrifices to a minimum. I have completely given up any idea of a French version of the five chapters of the large German work entitled : Health, The bases of the struggle for Life, Soul, The principle of Polarization and Marriage, and Life is an Art, because the same problems have been treated with sufficient fullness from the French point of view in chapters I-IV of Problems of Personal Life, chapters IV, XV, XVI of The Art of Life, and in certain passages of La Révolution Mondiale. I have also given up the idea of incorporating in the present work the three chapters : The primæval connexion of men, Weltfrommigkeit, and Sanctification. The second is an untranslatable term which means a re-ligio, a binding up with the natural world, in the same way, and with the same emotional nuances, as religion properly so-called preserves in its relation to the supernatural world. I have done so because they deal either with problems exclusively German, or else with general problems from a specifically German point of view. But in order that nothing of general interest might be lost, and that nevertheless the mutilation of the German book might lead to a complete self-coherent French one, I have put into the two chapters specially composed for this new one all that the German chapters mentioned above contained unpublished or of special importance, taking care that this new book should make no break of continuity in the series of my French works, and bringing in many fresh considerations not contained in the large German book.*

*I was anxious that this new work should appeal to the minds and sensibilities of the French, and of the other nations who are their neighbours, as directly my German works do to the Germans. For this I needed, in certain places, a knowledge of the atmosphere and relations peculiar to France which I could not possess. Here some of my tried French friends have suggested additions or corrections. It is I alone, of course, who am finally responsible for the published text, but I should like to say how much I owe to such friends for many suggestions and much information relative to France.*

*I desire also to express my most sincere thanks to Messrs. Jonathan Cape who have kindly allowed me to make somewhat*

FOREWORD

II

*lengthy quotations from books of mine which they have published*  
—the Recovery of Truth, Problems of Personal Life, and  
Creative Understanding.

HERMANN KEYSERLING.

DARMSTADT,  
*April 1938.*



## INTRODUCTION

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AS THIS BOOK FORMS THE COMPLEMENT AND, AS IT were, the keystone of *Problems of Personal Life* and *The Art of Life*, there is no need really for it to be preceded by an introduction. It seems to me, however, useful explicitly to link up the results to which it tends with the ideas already gained by the readers of my other French books. I am going then briefly to recapitulate these ideas, and this is the more needful as some of my readers have perhaps not read my earlier works, and also because they serve as the basis of the solution which this book gives of the great problems of Soul and Spirit. It is impossible to comprehend the ultimate significance of truthfulness, of loneliness, of suffering, of freedom, and finally of fulfilment, in the sublimest sense of these terms, unless one first of all perceives the animal foundation on which the spiritual structure is reared, and unless one has understood the relation of what is more than animal in man to what is purely animal. Everything is purely animal which can be traced back to Original Fear or Original Hunger, to the group existent before the individual, to the collective soul with all its tendencies to war, to conquest, and to oppression. This book will not deal with any of these latter, because they are not, properly speaking, human problems. As *Problems of Personal Life* has already applied the general ideas of cosmology and anthropology to the inner life of every man so far as this life is purely intimate, it only remains for us here, among all the great problems, to treat those which arise from the standpoint of the ultimate and irremediable loneliness

of unique individuality, and to set its personal activity within the Becoming and Destiny of the universe.

The content of this new book had to be linked up with that of those which directly preceded it : it seemed to me I could not do this better than by first of all formulating a thesis of principle, which would shed light from a fresh angle on the special position of man in the universe as a whole, and then by pointing out the crucial danger of our epoch from the standpoint of what may be called 'the humanity in man.' I shall conclude this introduction to the subject by a few reflexions on the situation of France in particular.

As Bergson has well said, the Man-animal and the White Ant stand for the end points of two divergent lines of evolution. Now the Man-animal is inclining to deviate from his own line so much that he is drawing nearer and nearer to the ingenious insect. This, for him, as he is not an insect by birth, amounts to a distinctly pathological deformation, implying loss of value, devitalization, and finally the extinction of the species. This convergence of the line of man's evolution with the ant's is brought about by the more and more exaggerated, not to say monstrous, part played in human life by what is objective and by objectification. His capacity for being objective, and for acting on the surrounding world by means of 'things' manufactured by his intelligence, is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Man-animal, and to this he owes the position of supremacy which he occupies in the scheme of Nature.<sup>1</sup> But if objectivity and what is objective are to play their normal part, their value must be reduced to that of an implement, which this strange animal needs in its struggle for existence just as the spider needs its web. Now man is more than an animal ; he is essentially the vehicle of Spirit. The Man-animal must then, if he wishes to become more human, overcome his tendency to objectification, that he may bring as many things as possible, and finally the entire universe, within

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter 'The Animal Ideal' in my *America Set Free*.



the radius of the sensation and action of the living subject conceived as in himself the last resort. In this sense all problems properly human have absolutely nothing to do with considerations of an objective order : such, for instance, as the problems of truthfulness, or the irremediable loneliness of the deepest self, of suffering conceived as fate on the one hand and as means of progress on the other, of freedom, and of fulfilment. Unfortunately, present-day humanity insists more and more obstinately on resolving these very problems by objective means or expedients : by imposing objective programmes it tries to stop the march of Fate ; by pursuing nothing but objectively incontestable successes it distracts attentions from life proper as lived ; by creating institution-models it hopes to find substitutes for personal creativeness and genius. Hence the essential infelicity and the increasing horror of our time. But on the other hand the growth of science and of technical skill means, in the case of the human animal, real organic progress ; man will only attain his organic perfection at the moment when his technical skill has become perfect ; that is why it would be contrary to sense to desire to arrest this progress. This being so, there is only one constructive solution of the problem set by the dilemma just indicated : the objectivation of the external side of human life—an objectivation not only inevitable but praiseworthy, too, inasmuch as it is only from the starting-point of the intellect that man can gain an insertion into the universal order equal in perfection to that of the animals—must be counterbalanced by a deepening of all that is personal. A corresponding interiorization must balance the exteriorization, a corresponding ‘intimateness’ must compensate for the more and more ‘public’ aspect of life. Then only, but then to a certainty, can the biological improvement of the human race *quâ* animal due to the functioning of the intellect lead to an ascent, to an advance of Man in the highest sense of the word.

The drama of the fate of the human race, at this

critical point in its development, is going to be played out on the stage of the person : will man succeed in re-integrating in his inner life the world which has grown to such formidable dimensions, where his external power is exercised even to-day, or soon will be? Will he, in the opposite direction, succeed in embodying in the external world the quality given to his soul and spirit by the requisite deepening and repersonalizing? Compared with this question all others are practically negligible.

In 1925 I wrote in the preface to my *Figures Symboliques* :

‘ If I were asked to sum up in a sentence what in my opinion distinguishes my teaching from that of other philosophers, I should reply : My teaching asks all questions afresh, starting, not from man in the abstract, but from the living soul, it re-states all problems with this as its starting-point. Man in the abstract was an invention of the eighteenth century. This invention, like every other hypothesis, had its advantages, for it is impossible to imagine anything wholly false. Man in the abstract is, to speak mathematically, the integral of what in man is purely intellectual. This side of him is essentially impersonal ; for it nothing but what is general exists ; for it there is nothing particular. And in so far as one thinks and lives with the intellect as beginning and end, the hypothesis is confirmed, and the abstract man has been able to constitute an ultimate reality, as proved by the aggregate of the theoretical and practical conquests of the era of progress. But on the other hand the events of these latter decades have shown that no further progress is possible with the intellectual man as starting-point, that the partisan of progress as conceived by the two last centuries is, in reality, retrograde, that to pursue the march along the same road leads straight to the abyss. As in every historical stage, the evolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was in fact one-

sided. The moral and spiritual side of man remained a stranger to the process of advance. And this fact having been made patent by the crucial experience of the War and the World-Revolution, we have begun to take account of the fact that the duty of the epoch is to throw the accent back upon the soul. But alas, this duty has from the very beginning been understood in a retrograde sense, since men have forgotten that the march of life is irreversible. The conquests of the two last centuries have been disowned. For myself, on the contrary, I am seeking to show that, rightly understood, our present duty consists in going steadfastly forward, that it is not a question, if we wish to advance and ascend, of denying the abstract man with all his potentialities, but of re-integrating him into the totality of the living man. Now this amounts to saying that it is a question of realizing afresh the reality of the soul on a higher plane of knowledge, the soul being considered as a living organism : that it is a question of restoring what the Middle Age understood better than we do, but on a higher level of comprehension.'

Now that evolution in the direction I dreaded has gone in these last ten years much farther than I foresaw at the moment when I wrote these lines, I am convinced that nothing but an extreme accentuation of the inward, personal, intimate values can save us from the most appalling dehumanization. Much more even than at the beginning of our era, is Christ's word of present concern : 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

I should like particularly to insist here—I have not done so in *Problems of Personal Life* and shall have no further opportunity to do it in this book—on the grave danger which threatens the Man-animal to-day, and, without entering on any particular questions, from this examination to disengage a fundamental truth, which it

is in my opinion indispensable to grasp clearly, if we are to understand all the particular questions more thoroughly. Not only is man *not* an insect—a good and sufficient reason why insectification can in no case make for the perfecting of the species—but also the Man-animal is lacking at present in nearly all the organic dispositions necessary to enable him to make full use, in a positive direction, of the advantages he has gained thanks to science and technical progress. Perhaps the best thing in the work of Henri Bergson's old age, *Les deux sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, is that he shows successfully that man, from his very nature, is only fitted to live in small communities, hence the majority of the political failures, to be noted everywhere in increasing numbers as the determining historical relations are on a wider scale. It is the same, *cæteris paribus*, elsewhere in all departments of life. The possibilities of speed which modern man has at his disposal for his own movements, and for the diffusion of news, do not yet correspond with his inherited organic dispositions. To-day it is still the pedestrian who sees most in the world around him; the man who best understands the course of the world is to-day still the one who has no more facts and information to use than were at the disposal of Alexander the Great. Of all the Italians who have ever visited France, it is still Julius Cæsar who has seen most, and best understood this country. These statements have their counterpart in a modern phenomenon which becomes more and more frequent, and whose expressions are more and more calculated to inspire us with horror. I doubt whether there have ever been men as insensitive as the long-distance flying-men, for whose senses and conceptions there is no noteworthy difference between England and Australia. Now, they are absolutely obliged to be, or to become, insensitive to endure the life they lead, for man is not organically ready for it. The man who goes in one day from Europe to Australia is, of all other creatures, most like the flea, and no flea could jump

carelessly and without ever missing its landing-place if it had while jumping to devote itself to the cultivation of its inner life. Thus the potentialities of modern technical knowledge favour, and even demand, insectification in the sense of a growing impoverishment. What constitutes the uniqueness of man among all known creatures is, according to the happy formula of Max Scheler, his 'openness to the world.' How can anyone keep up his openness to the world when he only notices what he can see at a speed of five hundred km. per hour, and when his normal contact with the non-Ego is carried on through the medium of mineral apparatus, and by the impersonal method of the radio, when the sense and the soul have not even differentiated expressions at their disposal. The man who is constrained to live thus, without being inwardly prepared for it in soul and Spirit, cannot really, to begin with, 'stand the shock' otherwise than by shutting up, like an insect, to all impressions not indispensable for his immediate ends. The flying-man is not yet to be compared to the bird : up to the present the rigidity of his technical media still affect his spirit, and render it rigid ; his rigid abode makes him develop the soul of a scarab.

These reflections upon speed of travelling hold good for everything that has to do with the same order of things. Too good a service for the supply of facts blunts the attention ; the habit of mechanically swallowing ready prepared knowledge at all hours of the day weakens the power of personal reflexion : the passive attitude demanded and developed by the cinema and the wireless paralyses the capacity for concentration ; the abuse of suggestion kills individual initiative. In the same way men who live the modern technified life suffer from the very first from an increasing atrophy of personality. The simple country squire who lived with proud independence on his inherited estates was a personality in every acceptation of the word. To-day what more and more distinguishes one man from another is a greater or less

amount of knowledge and professional capacity : what he *is* plays an ever smaller part. The new social organizations set up so far rest on the principle of performance ; this does not mean in the least that the accent is laid any more than before on the personality. Personality is an absolute : all its value resides in what it is. On the contrary knowing what to do, how to direct, how to obey, are concepts of relation, which consequently never refer to being. The principle of performance must, in proportion as it is applied in a rational way, lead to increasing specialization ; now the exact prototype of the specialist is the insect. I have purposely made this sketch a caricature, for of all drawings, caricature, when it is successful, presents what is essential in the most striking, and so in the most convincing form. So now I may surely, without any further explanations, formulate the following thesis : so far as progress is concerned, the problem of vital interest which is ultimately decisive, is not that of the maximum of action on the external world, but that of *knowing how the temporary non-adaptation of spirit and soul to exterior possibilities, (non-adaptation which threatens to convert every exterior advantage into a disadvantage), can be transformed into adaptation.*

Now man's centre of existence is undoubtedly situated in Spirit, and his basis of experience in Soul : from these two facts it follows with absolute necessity that we must begin with soul and spirit, and not with any other element of integral being, if we wish to see a new and higher equilibrium emerge from the chaos of this crisis of history. It follows from the same fact that it is actually possible to induce this desirable development ; there are no visible limits to a higher evolution of soul and spirit, there are none either to the deepening of personality. Now if this induction of development is possible it follows—by the law of Nature which wills that the Unconscious of its own accord transforms a clear representation into reality—that in time the development will take place spontaneously. This, certainly, will be at the expense of

some of the man's previous capacities, just as in general the fact of knowing how to read and write weakens the memory, but, taking everything into account, there will be a balance of gain. The existing inadequacy of man as formed by progress is then by no means an inevitable inadequacy, still less is it inevitable that it should go on getting worse : a perfection on a higher level than has ever been granted to any human type is fundamentally possible. But once more the one and only means of achieving it is henceforth to throw the accent, directly and without any intermediary, back upon the personal life. 'Objectivity' of any kind, as an ideal or final end, must be given up in principle from the very first. Every thing that is outward must be placed afresh under the dominion of the inner personal life ; to see and deal even with what is collective the starting-point must be the innermost life—it is only *after* this shifting of the accent, which cannot be brought about except by regarding the individual as personal and autonomous, that we shall be on the way to salvation.

I come thus to the fundamental truth which I wished to determine in this introduction, apart from any particular question. To achieve this I shall make use of two current ideas in a sense rather different from the usual one, but what I mean will, I hope, appear so clearly from the very way I employ them that I shall not need to justify myself. The extreme individualist tries to resolve all problems with the self as starting-point and goal ; this is psychologically the case, not merely of the superficial and materialistic egoist who undertakes to solve the riddle of the universe in terms of his personal well-being, but also of the profound spiritualist for whom all is Spirit, or all is the Self, or else all is God ; in all these cases personal uniqueness is the living centre to which everything relates. The extreme collectivist thinks he can understand and deal with everything from the starting-point of a complex whole and with it as end. This too is not merely the psychological case of a superficial representative of this

type, of the Marxist who sees his ideal in the life of the ants, who believes religiously in the possibility of an omnipresent State, or in a humanity in which personality will be swallowed up, but even of the really profound universalist. He either understands every personal phenomenon as a symbol of the universal becoming—as do most conceptions of the world which are sacral in nature—or else—here I am thinking of the China of old days—projects every event, whether personal, infra-personal, or supra-personal, on to one single universal plane where his glance embraces the totality of events. In every case it is psychologically a question of the same fundamental placing of the centre on a supra-personal whole. Now the individualist's and the collectivist's conceptions of the world are both of them out of conformity with their object and must be sternly rejected as soon as a higher standpoint is firmly attained. All knowledge has its origin in experience, in the sense in which this word indicates that something is *lived* without intermediary or mediation of any kind ; all comprehension supposes that the man surrenders himself entirely and without any prepossession. It is inadmissible, on the basis of and for the benefit of an intellectual prejudice, to unite or separate artificially what shows itself to consciousness with a determinate character. This is why all monisms, all dualisms, all pluralisms which do violence to reality as presented in experience, must be deliberately rejected. This 'radical realism,' to which—I am certain—all the positive future belongs, demands that there should be full recognition of 'the integral revelation,' that is to say of the total differentiated reality, as it really affects the whole man, with the relations which really exist between all parts of him. All this, it is understood, being seen from the standpoint of the man, for this personal equation is the living *a priori* of our idea of knowledge in its entirety. Now if, with the candour and absence of prejudice just stipulated, we take stock of the human being in his relation to the world as a whole, the primary phenomenon



we ascertain is that man, by origin and irreducibly, is composed of a *multiplicity of strata*. Man is really the microcosm which the Renaissance saw in him ; *all* the elements of the universe, *all* the forces, *all* the relations acting in the world live in him. They all live there exactly as they *actually* affect his consciousness, and not in the shape of cerebral illusions and reflective elaborations, nor in the form constructed by spirits given to wild fancies, who take their cerebral secretions to be more real than what is given in direct experience.

It is a question then, in the first place, of *recognizing* all this complexity as belonging to the human state. It is no longer admissible, at our present level of knowledge, to ignore such-and-such a part, or deny its value, or, speaking more generally, to think that the problem of life can be solved and mastered by taking refuge in prejudice and dissimulation. Even the most narrow-minded man pursues as his end the fulfilment of personal life. There is no other general ideal of real influence. Now fulfilment of life is possible only if man recognizes all that is in him, and each thing in its proper place, and then models his personal life upon the totality of what is given. What I indicate here is, so far as theodicy, cosmogony, and general anthropology are concerned, set forth, in a shape which for me is final, in my chief work, the *South American Meditations* ; I beg my readers, once for all, to refer to them when anything fundamental in the present book appears obscure or doubtful. The views of the *Meditations* define, as the basis of the solution of the problem of the personal life, a fundamental attitude which I shall here present in the concentrated form of a thesis, so that the reader may have at hand from the very first a thread of Ariadne to guide him unerringly through the maze of particular considerations which fill the remainder of the book. Here is the thesis : the final court of appeal for every man in all vital questions is his deepest personal loneliness, his unique and undeducible spiritual Self. It is from this starting-point alone that

any vital problem can be set and resolved. But man is not made up of the kernel of his existence alone. Elements directly *impersonal* form an organic part of his very existence. It is this impersonal which he must recognize in all its impersonality, and yet, without robbing it of its impersonal quality, as belonging to him personally.

AND NOW, TO CONCLUDE THIS INTRODUCTION, LET US look at the special problem of France. The Frenchman, more than any other European of to-day, has preserved in the underlying strata of his Unconscious that Christian mentality of which the dominant note is the fundamental dualism God-Nature, or expressed in two terms which are the exponents of the foregoing ones, Spirit-Flesh, the accent of value being laid on the Spirit. The Middle Ages, endowed with a vitality which no problems could sap, had known how to realize on this basis a rich vital synthesis; they had settled down on it in a kind of equilibrium. The Renaissance *seemed* to rehabilitate Nature, and indeed the revelation of Nature, previously neglected, dates from that moment. But in reality, all that Spirit did was to discover in Nature a new and entrancing *object*, so that after all, it was Spirit alone which gained by this new orientation, the speedy and seductive results of which gave it a flattering illusion of omnipotence. In France Rabelais' Pantagruel, who represented, strange as it may appear to-day, a programme of education and even of the formation of a new individual, is the first book which gives us a glimpse of the new and dangerous turn taken by spiritualization. For however vigorous and sane the ideal human type may be of which Rabelais sets before us the exemplar—in that robust sixteenth century this was a matter of course—the differential characteristic of Pantagruel is by no means an intense spiritual life, but something much narrower, the

appetite for *knowledge*, for knowledge in bulk, in which the quantity matters much more than the values. Thus the Renaissance, in reality, emphasized in Western Europe the traditional dualism Spirit-Flesh, and has above all accentuated the want of balance latent in it. In proportion as the spiritual values were again represented and weakening of vitality thenceforward showed itself by less vigorous individuals, the tilting of the scale in favour of Spirit became more and more flagrant. This is due above all to the fact that, for consciousness, Reason, and even intellect alone, came more and more to stand for the whole of Spirit.

This rationalizing and intellectualizing was particularly noticeable in France. To begin with, the breach made in the Catholic tradition was much less serious there than in the countries where Protestantism became a power. Next, this rationalization seemed to express the highest point of a period : the full flowering of the culture of the century of Louis XIV, a culture which however issued, it is plain, from strata lying deeper than the intellect and resting on more secret instincts. Taken as stated in its official programmes (Descartes, Bossuet, Boileau), this culture, the flower of a particular soil, the fragrance of a special emotional territory, the expression of only a small part of the country and the nation, aspired more and more as time went on to being universal (in the eighteenth century, but already in Descartes). It is true that opposition was not lacking. Molière, for instance, is the extreme expression of the resistance of the *bourgeoisie* to the new culture. Its existence shows clearly enough that this culture was only a quintessence, a highest peak of the nation, though it too contained, as it were in spite of its official claims, deep-seated values essentially French. However this may be, it won the day, and the fate of Louis XIV shows, in a symbol, the march of the culture which he stamped with his seal : one has only to notice the distance from the young king in his palmy years (1660-70)—sprightly, brilliant, passionately sensual

(though perhaps in a less elementary fashion than Henry IV), of the earthy—to the aged husband of Mme de Maintenon.

This general orientation of French thought and culture has only been approximately suited to the typical Frenchman as formed by a long past without any serious breach of continuity. As I have tried to show in the chapter on France in my *Europe*, the Frenchman is a man whose main and fundamental gifts are not of a rational and intellectual, but of an emotional and so of a moral order, for what is called in French '*le moral*' has absolutely nothing to do with intelligence and Reason. All the deepest sources of the French soul are of an irrational order, and so the Frenchman is, *at bottom*, whatever he may think himself, not the most rational, but the most irrational of Europeans. How otherwise, intelligent and subtle as he is, should he so fail to understand what is going on around him? How should he, more than any other European, cling to his outworn prejudices? How should he hypnotize himself with a verbal political ideology preserved like a fossil from a past age in a medley of stereotyped gestures which, for a German, make M. Blum seem now like Robespierre and now like Richelieu, unless in the deeper grounds of his soul irrational forces predominated? Nevertheless, it could not be said that French rationalism and intellectualism is wholly superficial: the truth is that his rationalism *as well* is an expression of the fundamental irrationalism of the French type. This is so for three reasons. First, because of the passion the French have for ideas: the fact that this passion is directed to ideas in no way makes it intellectual, it remains a purely emotional phenomenon; and moreover, when passion intervenes, ideas soon become nothing but words. Next, owing to the fact of historical development, it so happens that the world-wide success of French ideas from the time of Descartes and the philosophers of the eighteenth century—'the immortal principles'—has been one of the causes of French great-

ness ; patriotism therefore urges the French to venerate them. Lastly, do not let us forget that in France more than anywhere else, the strife of ideas is a strife of persons or of coteries : it is enough to read the writings of André Siegfried, of Thibaudet, or of Daniel Halévy, to see how, through all electoral incarnations, general questions are, at bottom, and unfortunately without anyone being conscious of it, personal ones.

It is interesting to note how far intellectual France of 1880-90, scientific and positivist as it was, and more generally the whole lay University have devoted themselves to upholding a ' Summa ' of mummified ideas which have become sacramental. The Sorbonne, with good right, still professes itself at the present moment the standard-bearer. But as a matter of fact, it only preserves an official doctrine. It claims, above all—and this has become by extension a slogan of French thought, a motto, a trade mark which can be discerned in every public speech, even if this latter is the expression of the most self-seeking policy—' to safeguard Spirit and defend it against the turbid forces of instinct.'

At the point we have just reached, the special reflexions I have allowed myself to make concerning France—reflexions which I hope will be forgiven to the author of *Europe*—run into the general theme which this introduction is attempting to state and define. France is much less Americanized, much less mechanized, to sum up, much less *insectified* than the Germanic nations are. But owing to the fact that she is still for the most part living on premisses laid down by the eighteenth century, *premisses which are out of date on vital points*—let the reader study on this point the essays : ' The Mystery of Polarization ' and ' Deaths and Rebirths ' in *The Art of Life*—she has become incapable of making further progress without a break of continuity in the sense of a higher human synthesis to be attained. I need not recapitulate here the train of ideas which was set forth with all the clearness of which I am capable in *La Révolution Mondiale* ; I confine myself to

pointing out the fact that the problem of Flesh-Spirit or Earth-Spirit, as still stated by official France *is no longer so stated* for the vanguard of humanity as it exists to-day, whereas not only official France, but almost the whole of representative France, intellectual and literary, still goes on setting it. If the human nature of the Americans and their European imitators is being stifled in a sheath of mechanical objectifications, that of the French threatens to be stifled in a sheath of ingrained prejudices of the intellectual order. To take a single instance among many: an incredible number of French intellectuals to-day still take the side of Soviet Russia, thinking that it is a question in that country of democracy, of the republican spirit, or even of liberty and world peace, which must be aided in the name of progress in its struggle against the forces of reaction. Now, anyone who is ever so little open-minded might, and ought to know since 1918 (and in any case it is to-day a fact made plain by history), that the present régime in Russia represents absolutely nothing which points in the direction of a future better in the human sense. Sovietism at its very outset signified a return to the state of mind representative of the Russia of the fifteenth century, hardly modernized by the acceptance of an ideology of the nineteenth (see my *The World in the Making*), and as time has gone on it has more and more become the régime of an Asiatic despotism, more blood-thirsty, more oppressive and more anti-libertarian than Tamerlane's ever was. Nevertheless, a number of good French minds persist in being blind to all the facts which are staring them in the face, and continue to believe in possibilities of a development in the direction of their ideal, which there is no real datum for anticipating; and if André Gide on his return from the U.S.S.R. has confessed himself disillusioned, he persists in not seeing that the development he deplores corresponds to the vital principle of Sovietism. I know that it is not solely a question of an obsolete rationalism hardened in certain rigid prejudices which has produced the same

inability to see and to understand whatever does not accord with these prejudices, as is elsewhere produced by excessive mechanization. I know quite well that it is also the effect of a sincere idealism of the Left, of a blind faith encouraging itself with Tertullian's *Credo quia absurdum*, and of a sincere revolutionary passion, which, by psychic inheritance and therefore by conservatism, cannot aim at any future, however remote, except by starting from the watchwords of the eighteenth century. But this does not prevent the results of French emotional irrationalism from approximating in an extraordinary fashion to those of the intellectualist and moralist mechanical mentality of the Americans. I own that in discussing these things with intelligent Frenchmen I often have the impression of talking to human ants: creatures marvelously intelligent, possessed of an age-long tradition which is not merely venerable, but incomparable, creatures highly refined—but who have lost their sense for light since the carboniferous age. It is well known that the termite lives totally secluded from the sun, and that the faintest ray of light kills it outright.

Because all this is so, the problem of France is, in spite of all superficial differences, identical at bottom with that of more mechanized nations; it is merely stated in somewhat different terms. For the word mechanism substitute rationalism or intellectualism, and the equation connecting the past with the future is exactly the same. In a certain sense the problem of France is more serious than that of more mechanized nations. For a sheath of ideas which are clear but petrified threatens to stifle the soul much more than a sheath of mechanical objectifications (which after all remains external)—because in the end it atrophies the eyes. France is in danger, fully and fairly, of becoming blind. In addition to this, all wrong orientation distorts the individual, degrades and stunts it. The rich emotional treasure of the race runs the risk of being buried. And it is its superior emotional nature and not its intelligence—I could not insist on this enough

—which has hitherto constituted the greatness of the French race.

I will not dwell upon it any more. It will be easy for anyone who wishes to see and understand to apply the general truths laid down above to any particular case that may present itself, and he need only make the transition each time from the problem of the mechanist to that of the stiff-necked rationalist, to find the explanation of the fact that all the problems set forth in this book, which at first sight appear to be rather German and Anglo-Saxon ones, are just as much French problems.



## TRUTHFULNESS

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A MAN AND A WOMAN HAVE SOMEWHAT INTIMATE relations, a disagreement follows, a quarrel : it usually happens that the moment comes when the woman claims to defend what she calls in French ' *ma vérité* '—my truth. This expression, current in France, has no equivalent in other languages, which is so much the worse for them : taken in the sense which the woman gives it, this formula is the best possible expression of one of the most deadly of all the prejudices afflicting Western thought. What does the woman mean by ' her truth ' ? Primarily, of course, her identity, her nature as a whole, and so far she is right : strip a human being of his identity and you annihilate him at one blow. But the significant fact is that in this case the woman is making use of the word truth and employing it wrongly. If, quite without reflecting, she denotes by this term—which properly refers to an abstract datum—what is most intimate and therefore most concrete in her, *it is because she herself conceives her deepest Self under the form of an intellectual abstraction.*

This agrees entirely with what we have said in our introduction on the subject of the traditional dualism Spirit-Flesh, inherited from primitive Christianity, which more and more from the seventeenth century onwards was wrongly interpreted in this sense that by Spirit was no longer understood the spiritual totality, but reason alone or intelligence alone. If then anyone defends

'his truth,' he is defending his identity according to the prejudice that the latter amounts to a system of personal idiosyncracies that can be rationalized. In the most superficial case, which is often that of the woman, it is a question of mere opinions, or even of mere tastes. This case is rare, fortunately, in Latin countries, but it is plentiful, too plentiful indeed, in Anglo-Saxon countries, where otherwise the expression 'my truth' is unknown but where the underlying tradition is the same as in France. An immense proportion of the divorces pronounced in the United States, if the woman is the petitioner, have as their alleged ground that the opinions of the husband do not correspond with those of the wife, or that she judges such and such a feature of her partner's character bad in itself, even if it is only that he likes smoking and she detests it. No fundamental incompatibility is at work here. In rather less superficial cases the 'truth' at stake is so understood that the peculiarities of which the woman is conscious, and which she can define in terms of the intellect, not only stand for absolute values, but they exhaust for her the totality of her identity. Now this amounts to nothing less than a monstrous restriction of her own personality. When once it is the intelligible definition of the Self which constitutes for a human being's consciousness the whole of his identity, he can, perforce, no longer accept as his own ninety per cent of his integral being. When in the scheme of the particular part he plays within any objective whole, he narrows down his field of consciousness in this fashion, this result is inevitable. As a soldier, for instance, he has no right to live except on a plane different from that of his inmost life, or to behave except according to rules foreign to him; in this situation obedience takes the place of conscience and of personal responsibility. It is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, with the official, the magistrate, the priest, and above all the actor, in their respective walks of life. In all these cases the personal subject does not count in the last resort; only the neces-

sities which are collective and so external count, to which the personality is sacrificed in view of a supra-personal end. But that a man should abdicate in this fashion before himself, that he should sacrifice his whole identity to a fragment of his Self, a fragment which often exists only on the plane of fiction—that is what is so monstrous. This, alas ! does not prevent this sacrifice from being in the modern Western world not the exception but the rule. I have here dwelt only upon this one aspect of the vast problem set by the possibility of substituting a part for the whole, a substitution which consists in replacing a given concrete by an abstraction, but evidently it is a case of filching from the whole in exactly the same way when a human being identifies himself with the flesh or part of it, to the exclusion of his other constituent elements. It is in this sense that many a time in history, virginity or chastity have meant for women the whole of 'their truth,' and that so many men see in them only 'the sex,' which in fact may become for them the one and only centre of their consciousness. In the same way, many times in history the whole possible truth of a man has been identified with his sexual power ; hence, by extrapolation, the phallic cult. Examples might be multiplied. Those which I have given are enough, it seems to me, to show to what extent man, especially the Western man of Christian tradition, is inclined to identify himself with only an infinitesimal part of his Self, and thus to distort his real 'truth.'

Can a being, who of set purpose is ignorant of himself to this extent, be called truthful ? Yes, if this concept is defined as a function of 'good intention' in the current sense of this term, and of professed opinion to which one adheres without reflection. But we know to-day, without a shadow of doubt, that, in the case of the intellectualized man of the West, the plane of consciousness on which 'opinion' and 'good intention' have their place, corresponds to only a very superficial stratum of the Self. It is the deeper being, of which the greater

part always remains unconscious, which is in reality responsible for all opinion, and more generally for every kind of deeds and gestures. To spare myself a long discussion, by means of a few striking examples chosen at random, I will lay stress on the following established facts ; they are true for the whole of modern civilized mankind : lack of comprehension, save in the case of *invincible ignorance*, that is to say of final and irremediable incapacity to comprehend, is *always* a sign of ill-will on the part of the underlying being of the soul ; inattention *always* proves the desire not to see, for the human organism is affected by absolutely everything, and reacts to absolutely everything. In the same way the unintentional slips which psycho-analysis calls ' faulty acts,' that is to say, accidents apparently due to an inadvertence of the subject, are in reality *always* willed. In two words : we are seldom mistaken in reasoning from a bad action to a bad intention and nearly always so in accepting a good intention as an excuse. Things being so, it is evidently not allowable to call a modern Western man truthful who knows himself little enough to identify himself with only an infinitesimal part of himself. In the absolute sense of the word only that man is truthful whose consciousness is the reflexion of integral being, and whose expression or manifestation corresponds at any given moment to this integral being. Relatively, only that man is truthful for whom the ideal which I have just formulated constitutes at least a categorical imperative. This definition, of course, decides nothing beforehand as to the possible expediency, on such and such occasion of a deliberate falsehood to another, and implies no moral verdict on this kind of untruth : it may be an expression of the purest charity. But this definition does imply and affirm the incompatibility of falsity to oneself and truthfulness.

Now this falsity, alas, is by no means the exception ; it is the rule. The ' Bovaryism ' of Jules de Gaultier, that is to say, the capacity for imagining oneself other than one is, is beyond dispute one of the elementary charac-

teristics of primitive man. And, contrary to what is generally believed, this is one of the deepest grounds of human unhappiness. The animal lives in the closed circle of a 'noticed world' (*Merkwelt*), according to the expression of the biologist Uexkuell, the data of which are not merely incomplete, but false from man's point of view. None the less, this world constitutes 'its truth,' for it can perceive no more than the little it actually does perceive, and this only by starting from the generic equation (I coin this neologism on the model of the term personal equation) of its species; moreover, all its reactions are rigidly fixed beforehand, leaving no room either for free choice, for caprice, or for error. The animal is, then, in as perfect an equilibrium with his environment, and consequently as happy, as it is possible for it to be in a world where individual happiness is of no account. Man, on the contrary, is 'the being who is open to the whole world,' as Max Scheler was the first to call him. Though he, too, perceives everything in accordance with the personal equation proper to his kind, yet absolutely everything may come into this equation as content and purport. This is equally true both in an inward or an outward direction: there exist no possible data which man cannot assimilate, either on the plane of Nature or on that of Spirit. Man—if we abstract from his physiology pure and simple which does not count for personal life—is devoid of rigid instincts, his reactions are not fixed for ever, and the ideas which he gets of things create on each occasion a new world which overlies the given one. For this reason, man's state is not that of a relatively original equilibrium, as the animal state might be said to be, though that would be false in the absolute sense, for life itself passes from one unstable state to another—see the cycle 'Growth and Decay' in *The Recovery of Truth*, and the summary given in the chapter 'Progress' in *Problems of Personal Life*—Man's state is one of original and irremediable *disequilibrium*. And for the same reason it is one of congenital unhappiness. Hence the myth of

original sin, and of the fall of Adam. Happiness, and more generally all equilibrium, depends in Man on the timely intervention of the spiritual principle which constitutes his underlying being ; it is only—I anticipate here what will be shown in detail in the last chapter—on the plane of the *Art* of life, and *never* on that of natural life, that the equation of a human life can be resolved in a positive direction. Now this art can be exercised only on the basis of an accurate understanding of life as it is, and it is precisely this understanding which is lacking not merely originally, but even to-day, in the vast majority of human beings. The lack of truthfulness which we have pointed out as being characteristic of civilized Western people is not only proof of defective moral faculty—it is proof primarily of defective science. Let us recall here what we said about ignorance as a proof of ill-will : at the epoch, when there was no science of the soul, it was not so to the same extent as it is to-day. ‘*Equilibrium by illusion*,’ if I may call it so, was then often very like animal equilibrium. To-day, at least in Europe and America, it is so no longer. Hence the greater part of what is odious in falsehood, ignoble in life, cowardly, cruel and oppressive in the era inaugurated by the aftermath of the World War and stamped with the seal of the World Revolution.

**T**HERE IS NO MEANS OF TEACHING MORAL ACTION (the teaching of ‘morality’ has no transcendent value, ‘morality,’ as I have shown in *Problems of Personal Life*, never signifying anything but ‘form and order in general’), for moral action, in the last resort, is always the fruit of a free decision. We must then, if we wish to resolve the problem of Truthfulness, start from comprehension. It too cannot be enforced, but given goodwill, it may, if we dare say so, be induced. Before however

attacking this problem, which is only preliminary, from the standpoint of the whole problem set, I should like to explain why I have chosen 'Truthfulness' as the title of this chapter and not 'Truth,' and why the first few pages even depreciated this latter notion. It is because this book continues the reflexions of *Problems of Personal Life*, and when once the problem of truth is stated starting, as I do, from the concrete subject, it is no longer primarily abstract truth which counts, but the profound experience we have of it and the adequate expression we give to it. Truth, then, is primarily only a function of the veracity of him who professes or confesses it (I combine in this term all manifestations of the courage to see things as they are, from the capacity to perceive them up to the capacity to express what has been seen and to hand it on). Detached from veracity, abstract truth does not constitute a problem of the personal life at all. It simply exists, it 'is there,' whether the subject takes account of it and admits it or not; the subject's conviction and belief, or on the contrary his doubt and disbelief, make no difference in it. The man who denies a well-established abstract truth before he has examined the proofs which warrant it, sins perhaps in the direction of truthfulness if he refuses to examine these proofs or to admit them, but he does not lie to himself when he affirms something which is objectively false. That man, on the other hand, is the enemy of truth in the only evil sense which exists, whose consciousness is not the unclouded reflexion of his own being and whose outward behaviour does not correspond to this being. That is to say that, from the point of view we have taken up, the problem of truth ought in reality to be stated as a function of truthfulness, and not vice versa. If then a man knows himself amiss, and if it is to this that he owes his unhappiness or his deterioration, or his inability to make progress, we cannot do otherwise than state even the problem of a higher objective truth to be attained as a function of the subjective.

And now let us plunge in *medias res*. Modern man is not truthful when he gives the title 'my truth' to a small fraction of himself, or to an opinion, or an attitude, or a belief, which do not correspond to his real being. He is not truthful when he clings to prejudices which he might forsake; he is not truthful when he pursues ends which are not in reality his. At this point I have only to recall the ideas gained and developed at length in my chief work, *South American Meditations*, and in a more accessible shape in *Problems of Personal Life* and *The Art of Life*; I shall recapitulate in a few words the theses which have to do with the subject of this chapter. Man is by no means the unity or simple monad presupposed by anyone who distinguishes 'his truth' from what is not it: man is essentially complex, infinitely more complex than traditional Christian dualism assumes, and complex above all in the sense that there exist in him different strata, the norms of which are often incompatible with each other, but which are all equally real, indisputable, and undeniable. On one plane man belongs to the order of minerals, on others he is reptile, he is cold-blooded, he is warm-blooded. In the psychic domain, the same complexity is manifested in the co-existence on different planes of the sensitive, emotional, intellectual, and soul orders, and these have no common denominator either. Into these different strata which overlie and interpenetrate each other at the same time, Spirit, which is essentially foreign to earth and so far different from that intelligence which in man plays the part of animal instinct, has broken-in with its own laws, completely different from those which govern all planes of the earthly order. Man's innermost nature is purely spiritual; the body proper in which it is incarnated is what has been called soul. All experience of the Self relates to this synthesis of Spirit and soul. Yet what is not this Self, what is not Self from the point of view of Spirit, cannot be detached from it; it is equally a constituent part of the total man. But man's complexity



does not stop here. One may suppose in theory—Leibnitz did so—that this being, complex as he is, is nevertheless a monad, independent in his being, and his existence, of the rest of the Universe. But all the facts of experience contradict this supposition. Man is not a windowless monad ; on the contrary, he is in constant and indissoluble relation with the Universe in its entirety. Just as in the sea-urchin and the star-fish the ocean plays the part which the lymph and blood do in the warm-blooded animal, so man is in organic psychic relation with the entire universe. Sever this bond you kill the very man. Hence his need of philosophy, of religion. Certainly—I have said so already, but it is useful to recall it here—man's world, however vast it may be, is like that of the animal a 'noticed world,' that is to say, a world perceived in a specific manner, like the world of every organism. That is what we have called its generic equation. It is this which is meant by Kant's eternally valid phrase : 'My world is my percept.' But the 'noticed world' of man, unlike that of all known beings, is not a portion of the universe cut off once for all, but is, potentially, the totality of the universe. What man cannot experience by means of the organs Nature has bestowed on him, he can render accessible by instruments, by reflection, or by a labour of intuitive imagination ; it is for this reason and to this extent that his natural way of seeing and conceiving is from the very beginning a vision of the *world*, a conception of the *world*.—If this is so, how should man, when once he has reached the grade of development necessary to understand what I have only briefly indicated here, but have explained thoroughly and in detail in other works,—how should he be truthful, thoroughly truthful, if he identifies himself with only an infinitesimal part of himself, or even with a naïve product of his imagination, if he conforms to superstitions, prejudices, erroneous interpretations, false premisses—false because they do not correspond to his real position in the cosmic whole? To-day any man

enjoying a modicum of intelligence, who diminishes himself in that fashion, gives proof of falsehood towards himself, and so far of ill-will.

This truth, as simple as it is irrefutable, does away at one stroke with all the value of 'eternal principles,' of all static conceptions of the world and of all intellectual and moral systems, in so far as these latter are conceived as rigid and finally fixed. It destroys all possibility of honestly believing that any real advance can be effected under the standard of logic pure and simple, of rigidity and impermeability to what is real. If man is in intimate, constant, and unceasing correlation with the entire Universe, there cannot be fixed premisses which can remain valid beyond certain very quickly reached limits. And when once these limits are reached, man can no longer make progress except by starting from fresh premisses. Now fresh premisses can be formed in him only by polarization with the Universe in its entirety.<sup>1</sup> This last statement gives the finishing stroke to the rationalist idea that progress might, so to speak, be 'deduced' from eternal principles. It also deals a death-blow to another notion: that of progress in the current sense. When it is a question of properly human evolution, and not of animal, progress is *never* in an outward direction but always in an inward. Man's deepest being is of a spiritual order. Now the vaster the field of experience which he undergoes and embraces, the deeper his roots ought to go down into the depths of Spirit, for the external wealth which man, constituted as he is, can assimilate, is in direct ratio to the depth to which he is rooted in Spirit. That is to say, there is no essential progress except in so far as man becomes capable of substituting for premisses lying on the surface, premisses lying closer to the spiritual centre of his being. Now, in forsaking old premisses, man is forsaking just

<sup>1</sup> All that is necessary on this subject has been said in the essay 'The Mystery of Polarization' in *The Art of Life*. I advise any of my readers who should not know it to read it.

those rigid principles and those guiding-marks without which the intellectual, and the French intellectual in particular, thinks it is impossible to exist. The real goal of progress is then on the one hand a total lived experience of the whole of the real, and on the other such a deeply rooted fixation in Spirit that, thanks to it, man can by the function of comprehension and by spiritual initiative acting through it, make the entire Universe his own.

It is from this starting-point that we see in what sense alone the idea of progress is conformable to reality. To open himself to a reality ever more and more vast, man must, in proportion as he advances, always be throwing down more barriers, breaking more frameworks which have become too narrow, freeing himself step by step from more limits which distort or falsify the real. 'This is what Western thought, from Socrates onward, has been doing, on a scale increasing in proportion to its emancipation. But, in proportion as thought became more differentiated, it has done so in one sense only, and in one direction alone—from and within the framework of postulates exclusively intellectual and intellectualist. In the end it no longer admitted anything but intellectual error. But this is not the only kind of error : in the same sense as an intellectual idea may be false, a moral law consecrated by tradition, a quality of will or feeling, a professed spiritual conviction, and even an æsthetic expression may likewise be false : every expression is false in the same sense in so far as it falsifies Significance. And it falsifies it necessarily if, in course of time, the realization of Significance has progressed beyond the expression previously found for it. That is to say that progress towards a better state, moral, religious, or even æsthetic, represents a real advance along the road which leads on the one hand to perfect openness to the world, and on the other, in correlation with this, to a deeper root-hold in Spirit, by the same right as progress on the road to exact knowledge does.

As illustration of what I have here advanced in the

shape of a theory, I will give the single instance of Christianity (its deepest significance will be set forth in detail in the chapter 'Suffering') : the love of one's neighbour, preached by Jesus, represents above all, compared to the cold exclusiveness of all the pagan groups, a greater openness to the world. And if now we cast a critical glance over all our past, we see that all the struggles for a more free and more open humanity have been nothing else but isolated battles to throw down so many particular barriers. The statement of this truth allows us, on the other hand, to foreshadow the final ideal : it would be an openness to the world in its entirety which would make of man a veritably universal being. Such an openness which would embrace the whole and would have an outlook in every possible direction has never yet, in history, been conceived as an end to be attained. From to-day onwards this aim is laid upon us. It is the great and lofty mission of the generations which are growing up and ripening at this moment in history, to prepare the way for this integral revelation at which a maximum openness to the world may arrive as its result.<sup>1</sup> A revelation which would not only reveal

<sup>1</sup> In the chapter 'Weltfrommigkeit' of the German work on which this book is based, the author considers that the German is specially designed to attain this maximum openness to the world. He supports this view by a detailed analysis of the 'German soul.' This analysis has not been incorporated in the present book ; it seems advisable, however, to indicate at least the general lines of it.

Georg Groddeck, in a conference at the School of Wisdom, has extolled the egg as the optimum expression of all life. Nothing reveals in such a characteristic fashion the profoundly spiritual depths of the German as this privileged rank bestowed on the egg above more evolved forms of life. The German ranks 'becoming' higher than 'being,' he esteems the obscure above the clear, and the unformed more than what is already formed. Because in his consciousness the accent of importance is laid on the *germinal* principle, of which the egg is the best illustration.

We find the clearest external manifestation of this germinal character of the German in a particular disposition of the German : the '*Gemüt*.' Feeling, state of soul, are only partial translations of this term. In essence the German '*Gemüt*' is something *undifferentiated*, that is the real significance of it. It is exactly the spiritual ovum which in the course of evolution will give birth to the precise and differentiated functions of the soul.

Setting aside the negative aspects of this non-differentiation, which we

to man everything which affects him from without, but which would also awaken the totality of his inner forces, so that henceforward in the grand fugue of his life, he

shall examine later, what is left is first of all this : from what is not yet differentiated *all* possible differentiated forms may be born. Hence the singular greatness of the finest sons of Germany : when Spirit informs a soul still at the embryonic stage, the incarnations of it are of an originality never to be attained by an already differentiated soul, because it is fixed already. The Germans, for instance, are by no means a *people* of poets or musicians : they only produce a greater number of exceptions belonging to this order than other nations do.

The German '*Gemut*' is, then, a primary principle. It is this principle which makes the German, which distinguishes him. That is why other nations have so much difficulty in understanding him, that is why the great figures of his history always represent exceptions, never types, that is why the average German has often so much difficulty in understanding himself. For the intelligence can master only what are already differentiated contents.

Of this embryonic character of the German soul the author examines successively the different negative aspects, and for each negative aspect the corrective positive one which it implies or which it permits the future to anticipate.

In the emotional domain to begin with. A culture of feeling such as France has known is not possible in Germany : that delicate intercourse which presupposes both close relations and respect for certain remotenesses is possible only between persons whose growth has reached its term. One does not imagine interchanges between two eggs : each is shut in by a shell. The German is originally a being with a shell, a windowless monad. In any approach to other men he must first of all come out of his shell. This, at first, can only be done thanks to an incubation temperature maintained inside a sort of 'nest' in which he is crouched—hence his love of closed circles, of societies, of everything which is secret and intimate—and, on the other hand, the shell must be broken, hence the catastrophic character of all closer human intercourse for the German : each time it is a 'tremendous experience,' a sudden outburst, the shock which destroys the isolating shell.

Another effect of this same germinal nature : Germany assimilates with difficulty the foreign bodies which make their way into the body of the nation, but the German easily adapts himself to a foreign mentality. He absorbs with difficulty, he is easily absorbed. All other nations when they do not segregate the Jews have speedily assimilated them, the Germans have not. Inwardly formless, the German readily accepts any alien form. Other nations hand down from generation to generation a complete psychic organism which, in its general scheme, may be considered a constant : the German transmits to his descendants only his blood and a few elementary psychic motive forces.

But it is just this aptitude for change, this non-fixation, which constitutes a deep source of supply in comparison with which the deficiencies which it implies are of no weight. The very special capacity for progress which gives Man a privileged position among all other creatures, arises just from his unfinished condition. Has it not been shown in *South American Meditations* that the considerable progress which the in-break of Spirit represents is

may call into play the whole register both of the Self and of the Universe together.

Now it will only be when he has attained this goal that

closely connected with the fact that the human organism has been arrested at a less differentiated stage than any other organism, that it has remained plastic longer, that is to say young longer? Man is essentially the unspecialized animal, the sensitive animal *par excellence*, open to all influences, easily affected by all things, and consequently easily transformable. It is thus that man in general is the 'germinal' animal, for all sensitiveness implies non-fixation. This germinality, an original quality of man's being, has, in the course of centuries, outwardly manifested itself among the most widely differing peoples; to-day it is incontestably the German nation which is the most germinal among all the peoples of white stock. Hence the great importance it may assume at this crisis of history when a fresh mutation of the human species is in preparation.

The German, then, in the deepest springs of his life, is the unfinished being *par excellence*. Hence his romanticism, his lack of moderation. Hence also his want of firmness: the German is particularly malleable, yielding, vulnerable. This lack of firmness is the cause of his weaknesses; it allows him also, on the other hand, to pass through trials to which any other nation would succumb. He does not 'hold out' as a Frenchman or an Englishman would do. He begins always by yielding to any pressure, by being transformed or adapted. This is because, unlike Luther an exceptional figure, he always 'can do other.' But it is precisely this which allows him, not to 'hold out' against everything, but to survive everything, to pass through every crisis. Yet another reason: there always comes a moment when the German finds any change whatsoever preferable to his existing condition. Not from curiosity or sheer love of change, but because in the course of his growth he has really become, in the depths of his being, another man: the outward form, born of a previous state, now cramps him like a shell which has become too small. It is a question then of a new birth, an idea which is so familiar to the German that he unhesitatingly admits that after a crisis everything must be changed and that an absolutely new man must be born, a concept not only unfamiliar, but absolutely incomprehensible to every other nation.

A nation of this kind is evidently a nation in a perpetual state of becoming. Its dynamic quality startles nations already fixed in their ways. Wrongly so. For it is not the dynamic quality of a volcano, but that of an embryo in the full process of growth: the dynamic quality of a creature inwardly fluid. People often think the German is the hard being *par excellence*, an idea still further strengthened by the theory that the conquering people of the epoch of the great invasions must have been German. In reality the Germanic ravagers were Goths or Vandals, people of the same stock as the Normans, not in the least yielding, and essentially different from the Germans. All ideology of hardness in the true German is never anything but a counterweight, a compensation, as Emerson called it, or the expression of a desire. So far as his practical hardness is concerned, it will be noted, to begin with, that in a people essentially yielding, a hard minority may easily attain to the rank of dominant class, thus making what is quite exceptional appear as characteristic of the nation, and in the

man will be perfectly truthful, for it will only be then that his subjective truth will correspond to the objective and supra-personal truth. But as now already man feels

second place that in the German this hardness never represents the skeleton of the organism, but only the shell of the egg. What the German means by character is a striking example of this : other nations say of a man that he has got character when he has a certain consistency in behaviour an inward firmness, in short, what they mean by it is a being who is psychically vertebrate. For the German a man of character is a crustacean, a creature with a shell. External norms, obligations, duties willingly accepted, make him appear hard, but falsely so. As soon as the shell is broken one meets with nothing but unresisting protoplasm. Up to the present there has been an attempt on the morrow of each crisis to remedy the damage done by forming a protective new shell. But all shells are made to be broken. National-Socialism has been the first to begin a process of education which may make, out of an embryonic being, not a crustacean but a vertebrate.

This malleability of the German conceals immense potentialities for the future. He is, *par excellence*, the being who is never constrained to remain what he is. He is more capable of becoming a new creature than any other white man. It is for this same reason that he rates 'Erlebniss' (a word previously explained which may be translated approximately by 'inner experience'), more highly than action. A being who pursues as his aim his own growth, and his own transformation, as every germinal being does, quite naturally lays the accent of importance on the experience as lived, not on the results of it. A being who wishes to be born again must first die. It is thus that the legend of the Nibelungs is even now specifically German : it is profoundly German to provoke a *dénouement* which, from the point of view of reason, is senseless, because it might be avoided. It is for this reason that countless Germans went on fighting after the Marne, just because they knew the war was lost. Another example of it is this sentence read in 1934 in a very German daily paper : 'It is just the tragic *dénouement* of the World War which proves that it had a deep significance' We see here that lived experience, even when terrible, is understood as the highest value. It is useless to emphasize the constant risks run by beings so constituted. But life has as its motto, 'Die to be born again,' and the more the accent is laid on the new birth, the more death takes on a symbolic value. To-day the really essential duty of the human race is to surpass humanity as now existent. If it were not so, the men of this epoch who are spiritually significant would not feel so isolated, isolated not as representatives of a past, but of a future yet unborn. In this task lies the immense possibility which our age offers to the German.

The author goes on to explain, making use of the terminology of Seillière, that the German is a 'naturist' being, and for this very reason little gifted for the religious life. What he thinks is religion is nearly always nothing but a world philosophy. Theology interests him, but not Paradise. What is the positive aspect of this deficiency ? It is 'Weltfrommigkeit,' a term which implies a re-ligio, a re-connecting with the natural world, of the same order as the connecting with the supernatural world expressed by religion. This attitude, of course, is not the only possible form of man's attachment to the material universe. The Chinese, the Italian, the southern Frenchman,

this possibility in himself beforehand, every illusion, every error from which he might be free and which he allows himself is a falsehood which distorts, deforms, and diminishes his personality.

WE HAVE TRAVELLED FAR FROM THE TRADITIONAL Western interpretations of the ideas of freedom and openness of spirit, of progress, and of ascent : from the point of view of the liberty of spirit which official France, and a large part of representative literary France still proclaims, the question does not even arise whether there can be liberty outside the framework of rigid dogmas which the lay Spirit professes. In the same way, the mentality which still predominates in the countries of English tradition does not even dream of the possibility of an openness of spirit in any other sense than that of an angle, the arms of which certainly at the limit embrace infinity, but whose point is fixed for ever. In reality—it cannot be too often repeated—all true progress is in an inward direction, and so diametrically opposed to the only progress admitted as possible by the Western

are all profoundly attached to the soil they cultivate. Of all Europeans the Spaniard is the one who establishes the closest relation with the earth in general (see the *Meditations*). What characterizes the German is a particular feeling for water, marsh, mist, moonlight, which is in correlation with his germinal character : protoplasm is cold. His 'Weltfrommigkeit,' then, does not signify a relation which would exist between man and Nature, or any part whatsoever of reality, a relation ensured by the interposition of organs or differentiated functions : it signifies a relation of integral lived experience between an embryonic being and the totality, felt as an indissoluble whole, of everything which surrounds him, conditions him, influences him, and gives him form, and so a relation between man and the cosmic whole conceived as a sort of mother's womb. It will be understood, from now onwards, that the German 'Weltfrommigkeit' represents, among all actually given dispositions, the one which is most favourable to the necessary transition from an intellectualist culture to that most integral culture possible to which the future belongs : a culture which will know how to draw together in an organic synthesis *all* the energies of human nature. That is to say, that it represents the best point of departure to attain a maximum openness to the whole world. (French Translator's Note.)



champions of the theory. This progressive interiorization leads, every time a distinct form of life has attained its maximum differentiation, to the formation of new premisses and not to a further evolution from those already fixed, as the adherents of the dogma of progress believe ; it leads, therefore, to a solution of continuity. On this subject let the reader study the chapter 'Deaths and Rebirths' in *The Art of Life*. Now at this turning-point of history, nothing but a passing of the critical point which such a solution of continuity represents will render further interiorization possible. To pass it is then positively indispensable from the point of view of Truthfulness, for the deepening of comprehension that we have already attained has even now undermined the very bases of the whole dogmatic structure reared by the progressive and mechanical lay Spirit—however little the majority may be aware of it. Even now already the cultivated man who understands himself is unable to admit the fundamentals of this structure without being untruthful to himself.

Before treating this new aspect of the great problem which occupies us here, I will relate, as introduction to the subject, a rather amusing anecdote. A fortunate chance put into my hands the pamphlet of a protestant pastor who was discussing the best method for missionaries to succeed in converting the heathen and defended the following view. If any man, black, white, red, or yellow, does not believe in protestant Christianity of the particular shade professed by the said honourable pastor, that proves beyond all doubt—his is a clear case—that this unfortunate man represents a pathological case curable by psychoanalysis. All the missionary has to do, then, is to psychoanalyse the unbelievers, he will infallibly succeed in converting them. This good man, whom I knew personally later on and who really believed what he maintained, was wrong no doubt, for no unalterable and exclusive religious creed wholly contains 'the' truth. But he was only half-wrong or half-way there. It is

perfectly true that every idea or representation which is false, false not only in itself, but false above all in that it does not correspond to the ideas which the individual in question *ought* to have if his thought corresponded to his true being, in the long run acts as a producer of disease. If, then, a man who up to that time professed beliefs which were unsuited to him, were converted to a belief which corresponded to his true being, this would in reality produce a cure. For in this case the conversion signifies the forsaking of falsehood for truth, and so the quitting of a pathological state for a normal one. It makes possible afresh the truthfulness which had become impossible because there was organic discord between consciousness and reality. This is, incidentally, the tragic side of progress: given a primitive state, the falsest ideas may be the expression of truthfulness, for then this false corresponds to the being, as the 'noticed world' of a poulp (cephalopod), false from our human point of view, corresponds to the generic equation of its organism. But the more knowledge advances and deepens, the less false ideas are compatible with truthfulness. And it is here not a question of knowing whether or no a person is intelligent enough or learned enough to understand; since the psychic organism of the collectivity changes with time, even those who have not consciously shared in the change which has taken place are affected by it. The man who no longer understands his own time at all, and is no longer at all adapted to its necessities and demands, is psychically a deformity, in precisely the same sense as an organism is deformed physically by the atrophy or degeneration of its organs. Hence the want of harmony in our age, the essential characteristic of which, as we have seen in the Introduction, is the lack of adaptation between the inner man and his external powers; hence the great part played in it by wrongly centred types, psychopaths and criminals. Hence as final logical consequence the unspeakable horrors in which the era of progress and the final victory

of the democratic idea have ended. Men and women would not be crucified and burnt, as they are being in Spain at the moment when I write these lines, if there were not a pathological schism between the deepest being and the ancestral habits of the Spanish race, and the so-called advanced ideas with which the atmosphere is impregnated. Soviet Russia would not be infinitely more cruel and more oppressive than Czarist Russia, infinitely less democratic, and to crown all lacking in all charity, unless the abrupt conversion of the Russian people to Christianity in the ninth century and the equally abrupt reforms which followed had unbalanced its soul : now it can no longer be restrained except in a strait-waistcoat which brings to life everything that is worst in it.

I have stressed over and over again already the ugliness which is begotten of falsehood ; in fact, there has never been any period in history when ugliness reigned to the same extent as it does to-day, when the protagonists of historical becoming no longer admit the validity either of Christian morality, nor the chivalric code of honour, nor even of the elementary norms of the respect due to humanity. But what is the ultimate reason of this patent fact that falsehood begets ugliness ? The first answer we have already given : it is because falsehood signifies and produces deformation of the psychic organism. This latter is fluid ; every image that it assimilates produces in it real changes ; but if an image is not in conformity with the truth of the being in question, it distorts it, there is an infraction of the law of correlation between meaning and expression, and this is manifested in the life itself, not on the plane of outward representation alone. We can approach the problem still more closely, and in so doing shall take a great step forward in the solution of the fundamental problem which occupies us. The psychic organism, just like the physical organism, has its under-world. The psychic manifestations of this under-world of the soul are likewise for the most part hateful and

disgusting. And yet, in the psychic domain, as in the physical, these processes are not only inseparable from other processes of more attractive appearance, but it is just they which are the vehicle and support of all earthly life. If now the forces and powers of each stratum or stage of being are manifested, each in its proper place, there is, in spite of everything, harmony and beauty. Now it is just this harmony which the understanding is for ever destroying afresh, because it is for ever hoping to do better than Nature, and cannot be content to admit that there is no common denominator for all the elements of its nature. Here the relation which exists between sex and Eros represents the phenomenon which is the prototype, from the standpoint of the facts as well as of the misunderstanding we have just denounced. It is for ever contrary to the aspirations of soul and Spirit to behold the sublimity of the one and the obscenity of the other fused in one image. But the understanding has such a strong bent towards monism that it endeavours to do it all the same ; it tries then either to idealize Sex, or to detach it from Eros, and disown it. Now man is as he was created ; if he pictures himself as other than he is, this falsehood does nothing but increase his deformity. Repressed sexuality poisons the whole organism, glorified sexuality weakens the life proper of the soul. If the psychic states which man has traditionally experienced in the shape of Gods living on a plane of projection are repressed, this repression transforms the gods into demons, Pan becomes a devil, Venus an infamous prostitute. Conversely the deification of the body dehumanizes man. He can no longer turn himself back again into a fine animal ; he can, at most, become one of those domestic animals he has himself perverted, a dog or a pig, or else deviate from his proper line of development in the direction of insectification. These considerations, which in themselves relate to another order of ideas, make it plain with the utmost exactness in what sense all falsehood begets ugliness ; the latter is the inevitable product

of all deformation and all falsification. Thus hardened reactionaries or traditionalists are ugly in the same sense as a body afflicted with arteriosclerosis. Bolsheviks are ugly because, given the profound native religiosity of the Russians, they cannot be truthful while professing an ideology which denies the very existence of the soul. The intermediate types, finally, are ugly because they do not in reality make up their minds on behalf of any truth, because their life is impersonal, and not at bottom autonomous, so that the question of truthfulness and so of a subject which could harmonize the complexity of their being from within, cannot even arise for them.

The man of this first half of the twentieth century is compelled then, if he wishes to be truthful, to dive beyond, that is to say deeper than, the preconceived ideas with which he was born. He is compelled to reach a higher level of comprehension of Significance ; to speak metaphorically : he is compelled to pass through the level on which there are only the letters of the alphabet and to penetrate deeper to the level of the Meaning which they express. To make as explicit as possible what these last sentences imply, I could not do better than reproduce a long passage from my lecture, *The Spiritual Unity of Mankind*, given at the grand session of the School of Wisdom at Darmstadt in the year 1923, which had as its general theme the relation between our conception of the world and the concrete formation of life, and is to be found printed in *The Recovery of Truth*. I prefer to quote rather than to develop the subject afresh—though what this lecture is concerned with chiefly is the transition from the dogmatic Catholicism of to-day to a supra-dogmatic Catholicism—for I could not formulate better what I have to say on all the vast problem of ‘ penetration through the plane of the letters of the alphabet ’ which is a condition *sine qua non* of all realization of Significance. ‘ This process of change of level effected to give form to Spirit by passing from the letter towards the centre constituted by the Meaning, may be defined very clearly

in a single sentence : it consists in *seeing through* phenomenal appearance. Every living phenomenon is from first to last a symbol, for each is in essence the manifestation of a reality which lies beyond the concrete perceived by the senses. And every symbol which, for a given position of consciousness, represents the last word of possible comprehension, becomes in its turn transparent as soon as a deeper plane of consciousness is reached. This replacing of symbols which have become transparent by new ones which are provisionally opaque goes on indefinitely, for, in that concatenation of Significance which Life is, everything is connected inwardly, and everything has its roots in what corresponds, as reality, to the limit concept of the Divine. This is why no given form is ever final ; this is why all significance, the instant we succeed in seeing through it, is automatically transformed into an expression, which is verbal or literal and so devoid of significance proper, of a deeper significance. But at the same time the phenomenon, which on its own plane remains unchanged, takes on a new and different signification. It is in this way that Catholicism, Protestantism, orthodox religiosity Russian, Islamic, and Buddhist, may as comprehension of Significance advances, remain in principle, on the plane of this life, what they were previously—and yet may nevertheless signify something absolutely new. It is in this way that Roman Catholicism without becoming undogmatic—a doctrine can never do that—might become supradogmatic from the standpoint of its present dogmas, and so capable of being a centre for the whole human world, without changing anything whatever in the vital principle of its dogmas. It would simply bestow on them a fresh significance which would transfigure them. We know by psycho-analysis, how objectified states of mind which in the form of demons assail the self when cramped in frames too narrow for it, may be transposed, by comprehending them, on to the proper plane of the subject ; the attack of these demons is then stopped, for these

apparently foreign elements are then taken up into the most intimate self and at the same time form a wider and deeper Self. It is precisely in this manner that humanity, in the course of the thousands of years which separate it from its primitive condition, has by an unconscious analysis ridded itself of one pantheon after another, of one pandemonium after another. And the farther this liberation from external gods and demons has advanced, the vaster and richer the Self has become. Now the task laid upon us to-day is a great step farther along this same road. It is the task of penetrating to the *Creative Significance* of all the formularies of belief hitherto professed, and in so doing to penetrate to the creative significance, the λόγος σπερματικός of all other spiritual formations, for there is no essential progress except in an inward direction, in the direction of Significance.

‘When once we have penetrated to the ultimate Significance that we can foresee—what will happen? What will happen is that many things will change of their own accord, even in their phenomenal appearance, for they will have *become* different. It is the Significance which everywhere in life creates the existent state of facts. A protestantism which has been seen through will no longer be the old protestantism. An orthodoxy which has become transparent will no longer be the old orthodoxy. A catholicism seen through will not be the old catholicism. No partial view will any longer be falsely taken for an all-embracing view, every non-central position will be abandoned, every spiritual formation will be put in its astrologically exact position, and at the same time understood as the correct expression of the Creative Significance which animates it. But inevitably, in course of time, this will also lead to a transformation of the world of external phenomena. So far as concerns the genuine catholicism worthy of its name which would reign then, catholicism of which historic catholicism would have been no more than the matrix, it would not only be supra-confessional, but even supra-Christian. It might

become the unified system of all forms still livable—livable in so far as the law of correlation of Significance and expression would not seem infringed in them, an infraction which will lead to certain death all the more rapidly because humanity will have become more conscious of Significance—it might become the soul of *all* conceptions of the world, just as to-day it already comprises the most different one-sided types. And what would then be called 'catholic' would not only be a supra-confessional religiosity, it would stand for a Beyond relatively to all world-religions existing up till now; catholicism might then become the generally transmissible expression of the Spiritual Unity of Humanity, a unity to which all men would thenceforward consciously belong. Then the catholic man would be understood as a synonym for the universal man, the man of humanity properly so-called, and no longer as the champion of a limited profession of faith. As a man who, living wholly rooted in the ultimate Significance and seeing through phenomenal appearances, would have become what I have called, in *Creative Understanding*, *superior to the world*.

'It is a matter of course that in the process of transformation automatically set going by the fact of seeing through existent formations, many things will become absolutely different from what they were. I have shown elsewhere that an absolute agreement of Significance and expression, from the depths of being to the uppermost surface, is the condition which alone guarantees that a form of life is destined to endure: this implies that henceforward every scientific error will be fatal. It is thus that everything in religious dogmas which cannot stand criticism from the standpoint of Significance will inevitably perish. From this will result on the one hand the decline of all lower forms of religion, and on the other a mutual fertilization of the higher forms. All those which give to any possible fundamental attitude an expression conformable to Significance will continue to live, but all without exception in a new interpretation which will



correspond to their true and exact position in the cosmos.'

What this fragment of a lecture says concerning the extant denominations of Christian belief, applies equally to Spirit which is non-clerical, radical, democratic, etc. They all represent obsolete stages, all have their *raison d'être* in premisses which have had their day and must now be abandoned ; and here, too, the only road which leads to safety is that of 'seeing through.' Now this seeing, radiographic in a way, leads each time to a higher level of being, the condition of which is that the man should be rooted in a deeper stratum of Spirit.

From what has been explained in these last paragraphs the essential point to be deduced and held fast, from the standpoint of the theme of this book, is that there can be no truthfulness if we start from obsolete premisses : from the standpoint of the subject, whether he be conscious of it or no, every obsolete premiss is *untruthful*. From this statement a general truth is to be drawn. It is neither new religions, nor philosophic systems putting forward a new view of the world, nor new social programmes as such, which will bring salvation to humanity travelling anew in childbirth : *a renewing of man in his totality alone* will mean salvation. But here the problem of 'Bovarysm' arises once more, and this time in all its monstrous greatness. Man can imagine himself other than he is. He is perfectly capable of living in every sense though starting from false premisses. It depends upon the meaning which he himself gives to things whether these latter become in each given case what they appear to be. Think of the phenomenon of war which I bring forward here simply as an illustration. War is, and becomes in fact, what the nation which makes it judges it beforehand to be : horror pure and simple, nay more, a crime, according to pacifist democracies ; a legitimate means, in the sense of a last resort, in the commercial struggle, and for this reason never a struggle between equals which would impose upon the victors the duty of magnanimity, as the

English understand it ; according to Fascist ideology the masculine equivalent of what the labour of child-bearing is for the woman, therefore a primordial necessity, and so far, on the whole, a good ; for national-socialist Germany the field for the prototypical application of willing sacrifice of oneself and so of the noblest individual enthusiasm ; a noble game according to the idea of all chivalrous civilization—war has shown itself and shows itself on each occasion exactly corresponding to the preconceived idea which men associate with it. But has it not a meaning of its own, independent of that which imagination gives it, an intrinsic meaning from the standpoint of man's underlying nature ? Certainly, and this is its real and only 'truth.' Let us go straight on from this point, not insisting any more on the particular example which has served us as entrance gate to the fundamental problem of the relation that exists between the significance bestowed from without, which creates as it were a secondary reality, and the intrinsic significance which constitutes the intimate truth of the given phenomenon. Man is truthful in the absolute sense only when the significance which he grasps and which he gives is what we have just called the intrinsic significance. He can reach that only from the starting-point of his own real truth. Now from the time a man has reached the level of consciousness which corresponds to this truth, then, but only then, the question of arbitrary interpretations no longer arises. And it is to this last and highest state, in which the Significance proper of man's underlying spiritual nature would govern the whole of his life in its true relation to the Universe, and to which accordingly absolute Truthfulness would give the tone, that all progress rightly understood aspires.

IT OUGHT TO BE CLEAR HENCEFORWARD WHY A BOOK which forms the sequel to *Problems of Personal Life*, and whose object is to set the problems of man's essential nature within the framework of cosmic Becoming, should begin with a study of Truthfulness. It is under the banner of truth that man assimilates the external world, and makes himself master of it : it is impossible to control Nature without having a correct view of its phenomena and exactly observing its laws. But the idea of truth is valid not only to define the optimum relation between man and the external world. Towards the inward world also man advances only under the banner of truth ; only here the primary significance of the idea is of a subjective order, and it is not abstract truth, but the concrete truthfulness of the individual in question which constitutes the criterion of value. Man, however, is a relation between the Self and the Not-Self ; it ought then to be possible to arrive at a synthetic and simultaneous view of both aspects of truth, for it is from such a synthesis foreseen by him that man in fact lives. To conclude this study then we will try to indicate in broad outline the tenor of this synthesis. And this will lead us to nothing less than to laying the foundations of a new philosophy. This last problem is of capital importance—I shall therefore be compelled to explain myself somewhat at length and not to be afraid of some repetitions.

By his lower nature every man tends to put his faculty of knowing and his power of decision, as if it were natural, at the service of what I have called (beginning with the chapter so-called of *South American Meditations*), his *Gana*, that is to say the obscure vital forces underlying the differentiated and distinct manifestations, forces which belong to the region of the underworld and are, for the most part, when judged by the norms governing the life enlightened by Spirit, at bottom evil. It is for this reason

that everyone—but especially the English people who admit no value but moral good, and the French people who admit none but intellectual clearness—so easily discovers as many reasons and pretexts as it is theoretically possible to invent, to justify this or that fashion of being or acting which seems to him profitable. Now this elementary tendency to find good reasons for every blind impulse of the *Gana* is the *raison d'être* of the particular character of nearly all systems of morals and justice ; it is likewise one of the original roots of all conceptions of the world (*Weltanschauungen*)<sup>1</sup> elaborated by so-called impartial thought. Nothing is more mistaken than the belief according to which systems of justice and morality pursue first and foremost Justice and Good, and philosophic systems pursue Truth : children of Original Fear, they seek first of all to maintain the *status quo* of an intellectual equilibrium, the pillars of which are prejudices, and of a good conscience proof against any test, the foundations of which cannot be shaken by any evil action. In this sense it is English *cant* which stands for the prototype of every philosophical system, moral or other, accepted and admitted by a large number of human beings. The virtue proper of *cant* is that the simple rule of the game which it postulates as a universal law, allows an individual or a people to do anything whatsoever, provided they preserve appearances, and obstinately maintain that everything is going on for the best for everybody. If we think of the phenomenon of *cant* it stares us in the face that all the great systems that the human soul has constructed like fortresses to defend itself against Original Fear, are offspring of falsehood by which man has tried to dupe himself, and not offspring of his aspirations after truth. Now these falsehoods not only betray a deficiency so far as truth and accuracy are concerned, they are

<sup>1</sup> The German text says 'Weltanschauung,' which has been translated in most cases by 'conception of the world.' This term might often be replaced by 'philosophy,' but 'Weltanschauung' is not the same thing: the word denotes a personal, lived philosophy akin in that to religious belief. It is this philosophy alone which the author has in mind here.

above all concrete formations within the soul which separate man from his inward truth as well as from outward reality, and which do so exactly as material barriers would. On the other hand it is precisely here that we see best the elementary reason of man's aspirations to truthfulness : man longs by nature to free himself from the trammels which hinder the free development of his personality. But here another difficulty is added to those already enumerated which man meets with in grasping and accepting truth : man is from the first incapable when he looks at the world of conceiving it without spiritual prepossessions which form an *a priori* anterior to all experience. The break-in of Spirit into the natural order being accomplished by degrees, it is inevitable that from the very first there should exist an almost total incompatibility between the objective world and the anterior images of it born after the laws proper to Spirit. Hence, from the scientific point of view, the fantastic character of all primitive myths, of all the earliest interpretations of Nature, of all the social and political organizations of the earliest societies. But the more the process of the break-in of Spirit goes forward the more the fundamental law which governs the realization of Spirit on earth becomes clear : that of the correlation of Meaning and Expression (*Creative Understanding*, 1, 2). Now the essential point in this relation being the correlation itself, and not the scientifically demonstrable conformity of the phenomenon by which it is manifested with the Significance, the absolute application of this law of correlation is, in principle, possible at any grade of evolution whatever. A primitive man's vision of the world may represent a relation between man and Nature as they really exist, as exact as the clearest vision of it a scientific mind can have. But the more the functions of soul and Spirit are differentiated, the more also the exactness of the relation will depend on the degree to which the ideal of truth is reached, for all differentiation of the functions of soul and Spirit is accomplished under

the standard of a deeper and more accurate comprehension, whether of a spiritual, intellectual, emotional, or sensorial order. This demand for truth is valid, of course, as much in an inward as an outward direction, in what concerns the exact realization of the inward Significance as much as in the correct comprehension of external data. When once a higher grade of evolution is reached, the ideal of truthfulness—the spiritual expression of the ideal of truth—is no longer satisfied when anyone betakes himself to false representations of himself and the world *without its being a vital necessity for him as it is for primitive man. It follows that in the existent state of knowledge every philosophy which rests in any shape or way on an illusion is a falsehood.*

This last sentence states a requirement which is henceforward imperative for every philosophy, and has never yet been formulated in a manner at once clear and precise. It has never been so because in Europe it has seemed evident up to the present that we had the right to put the question of truth apart from that of truthfulness and also to answer them separately. This dissociation has its roots on the one hand in the history of our civilization: in the Unconscious of the men of the sphere of Christian culture there still exists to-day, as a heritage from the time when faith in revealed truths and autonomous thought were in conflict, a disposition to accept a bastard compromise arising from a superficial and inaccurate separation between knowledge and belief: according to this compromise knowledge has to do with what is certain independently of any personal adhesion, belief on the contrary consists in holding for true propositions which eventually cannot be defended scientifically, but which none the less can and ought to be on a particular territory, in a particular manner, admitted and professed by the believer. On the other hand the said association is explained by the memory of our primitive consciousness which likewise continues to act in the Unconscious. This primitive consciousness

could not bear to look reality in the face just as it is, and for this reason felt obliged to protect itself with deceptive images. For the fully developed man of to-day this necessity no longer exists ; he then has no longer the organic right to give in to this atavistic inclination. *The present historical moment demands that truth and truthfulness should be welded together in an indissoluble synthesis, because this fusion is to-day organically possible starting from a concrete state in which truthfulness and truth mutually require and condition each other.*

We can now approach the problem truth-truthfulness from the opposite side to that from which we have at first looked at it. Henceforth, we may now affirm, the subjective justification for a view of the world is organically bound up with its objective correctness, and this in spite of the fact that there could not be any conception of the world at once general and accurate, since this would be possible only if all subjects and all subjectivities could be 'brought into line,' like currencies reduced to the same standard. In fact the accuracy and conformity to the thinking subject of a conception of the world do not depend in any way on its being the 'only correct one': it is enough that it establishes a correct equation between a particular self, capable of a deep experience, and a world accurately determined according to the angle of vision proper to each self ; in other words : different conceptions of the world may in fact nevertheless have the same significance. From this truth follows the theoretical possibility of an unlimited number of equations, all different and yet all established with perfect correctness. Practically, it is true, this theoretical possibility does not exist. This is due to the fact that the Platonic distinction between *δόξα* and *ἐπιστήμη*, between opinion and intuition—this is undoubtedly the best translation of Plato's meaning from the standpoint of extant consciousness—is valid in an inward direction just as much as in an outward. In both directions we must demand total exactness, in the sense of a genuine

inner experience which is translated without any mistake into terms of the intellect.

When we have reached this point we see the necessity for a new kind of critique—a critique which at the present historical moment is binding upon us with just the same fundamental right as Kant's critique was of old : *a critique of the conception of the world in general* (Weltanschauung). Kant opened up a new era with his critique of reason. The critique of the conception of the world will be epoch-making in the same sense, if it lays the foundations of the art of distinguishing correctly between what in an individual is correct as a conception of the world, both in the sense of truth and also in that of truthfulness—correct because it is genuine—and what is false in the same sense. Given that an authentic conception of the world could be nothing but a correct relation between truth and truthfulness, the problem of a critique of the conception of the world could not, of course, be stated otherwise than concretely for each particular given case. Nevertheless, the correct solution of it may be universally valid every time, in the sense that every man who, placed at the same angle of vision, sees things correctly and has a deep and genuine experience of them, will necessarily arrive at the same solution. Moreover imagination is capable of jumping from one particular point of view to other particular ones : thus no one is, irremediably, tied down to his original limitations. This consideration proves finally that an objective critique of the conception of the world is possible. The elements of reality and their primary inter-connexions are the same for all men representative of the state of the modern man : nothing remains for the personal equation but the particular perspective in which they are arranged.

It is just these elements and their original connexions which are described by the present book in so far as it is the continuation and direct sequel of *Problems of Personal Life*, *La Révolution Mondiale*, and *The Art of Life*, books which form one corpus with it. In this series of works



I have tried, with reference to all problems of vital interest that I can see, to show reality as it is, and consequently to show that it is never necessary, and so henceforward inadmissible to accept a concept of the world which, whether in an inward or an outward direction, would turn out false or untruthful. At the stage of awakening which we have reached, it is no longer necessary to attribute to the Self what belongs to the Not-Self, and vice versa. It is no longer necessary to desire to change what is unchangeable, but on the other hand it is no longer necessary to refuse to recognize as irresistible fate what in point of fact is so. The vanguard of present-day humanity has become strong enough morally not only to keep Original Fear at bay, but also to vanquish it. It has also grown strong enough not to yield to the primitive instinct to create an artificial equilibrium by generalizing, unifying, and fixing definitively, an equilibrium which rests ultimately on a cowardly humbugging of oneself, and for this reason ends, sooner or later, in a catastrophe. Humanity nowadays is organically above and beyond every primitive formulation by 'one of two things,' every necessity to rely on a 'last word,' or an 'ultimate truth.' Simple belief in words is no longer permitted to those who still desire to count for anything in the process of the incarnation of Spirit in earthly life. No more is it henceforward permitted to anyone who desires to be taken seriously as a personality, to pass on to others the responsibility for the truth he wishes to affirm. The man who to-day still believes in dogmas in the way the Middle Ages did is either backward in development or an imbecile, or a coward, or else a rascal. Since Spirit has taught us to see through myths, it is dishonest to continue to believe in myths which our vision can penetrate. Since scientific knowledge has shown itself of a stature not merely to understand Nature, but also to master it, man gives proof of ill-will every time he opposes a scientific truth out of love for a prejudice. Since man can have knowledge of the real relations between the

different strata of human nature however manifold, there is no longer any excuse for him who persists in falsehood or, which comes to the same thing, in illusion.

We have now reached the crucial point for the philosophic and religious spirit. When once the intrinsic significance which his conception of the world may have for a man from the point of view of 'his truth' is understood, it is no longer necessary to *put the question of a conception of the world to be admitted or constructed where this question does not really arise*. And it does not arise always and everywhere. Not every problem is a philosophic problem; not every problem is a religious problem. In principle a conception of the world, whether philosophic or religious, has no significance except as the spiritual premiss of a human life qualified *as it really is*. That is to say, a conception of the world has no significance except where it is inserted in the universal order as manifested independently of all intellectual prepossessions; it has significance then only as genuine expression of truthful and veracious being within the framework of a personal equation correctly stated. In this way all self-deception stands condemned. Now it is on a partial self-deception at any rate that all systems of religious dogmas and all philosophies current up to the present have rested. There exists no system of religious dogma all the elements of which correspond to the real requirements of religious feeling; the majority of the dogmas still flourishing are fragments of ramparts constructed in the night of time by Original Fear, or else remnants of gross superstitions. Nothing but genuine personal religious experience can henceforward serve as a basis for religion. What is true of religious systems is true *a fortiori* of the philosophic systems of a monist complexion still current. Spirit is not All (Hegel), nor Matter (Büchner), nor Feeling (Goethe in his romantic stage), nor Will (Schopenhauer), nor Reason (Hegel again), nor the Ego (Fichte), nor Being (Parmenides), nor Becoming (Heraclitus), nor the Unconscious (Edouard de Hartmann and the modern psycholo-

gists), nor economic necessity (Marx), nor politics (certain modern German thinkers). That a system is logically possible and that it is constructed with an impeccable dialectic does not afford the smallest guarantee of its reality or conformity to reality.

The point to be understood once for all is this : it is absolutely excluded in principle that any philosophic system whatsoever can ever, as such, furnish a satisfactory explanation of the world, or establish a correct equation between the world and living Man. All reduction to system has its ultimate *raison d'être* and its only vital foundation in the laws of intellect proper, and of the reason which craves to know everything once for all, and to attain a total vision in a logically co-ordinated whole. But in our world as it exists there is no 'once for all' and no 'last word' ; the intellect cannot grasp and comprehend all that is real ; the cosmos and man with it are in a state of perpetual Becoming, so that all static fixation on given premisses destroys the possibility of real knowledge beyond certain quickly reached limits. Only a very small portion of the world admits of being rationalized ; that is why the homogeneity of a system and the fact that nothing in it is self-contradictory—qualities which satisfy the reason—never prove its conformity to reality. Besides, there does not and there could not exist anything like an 'only possible' philosophic system : in principle there may be as many systems as there are possible premisses for thought which are compatible with an authentic experience. But absolutely every one of these premisses, if it is the child of the intellect alone and not of an integral experience of the world, belongs to the order of utopias.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, thought, as such, is the expression of only a single stratum of human nature which has such manifold strata ; this is why it is competent *for certain* only in its own sphere, that of logic, of mathematics, and of epistemology, and, so far as we know hitherto (but the

<sup>1</sup> See the definition of Utopia in the chapter 'Utopists and Prophets' of *The Art of Life*.

theoretical results of the latest scientific experiments may be refuted by some new experiment), to a fairly high degree in the sciences of inorganic nature. I purposely say 'to a fairly high degree,' for the most recent fundamental conceptions to which the investigation of the essential structure of Nature has led, already correspond badly (compared to what was held established twenty years ago), with the demands for intelligibility which the Spirit desirous to understand is obliged to make, no matter what the formal possibilities of logical and mathematical construction may otherwise be.

In thus showing—here I resume at greater length what was briefly said in *Problems of Personal Life*—that abstract thought proceeds from a single stratum of Man's being only, and corresponds to it alone, *we have disposed of the thinker properly so-called and can no longer take this type of man seriously*. The thinker pure and simple is exactly the man whom Rodin, with the instinct of his lofty creativity, has represented for us in such an impressive fashion : a jolly shallow fellow racking his brain. It is quite impossible by thought pure and simple to attain to the knowledge of reality. Kant knew this : it is just in those parts of his critique which deal with this that its immortal value lies. But unfortunately the latest age has fallen back far below Kant. Before writing this chapter I took the trouble to read carefully the works of certain recent German philosophers much in vogue, whom up till now I did not know or only knew slightly. I confess that the warped mind and misinterpretation which are at the basis of these works horrified me. Undeniably many of them are profound thinkers, and as the confessions of men who are desperately lashing their sides to grasp by thought that reality which, owing to their position at the periphery, will always escape them, their outpourings are of the highest psychological interest. Sometimes they even touch one morally. But that men so gifted should still to-day, or rather, should afresh to-day a century and a half after Kant, go so far astray as to deduce the reality

of the world from purely intellectual speculations, has proved to me finally that the type of the thinker as such represents to-day a form outgrown by life, a form which before dying is making a caricature of itself. So too the ammonites and saurians, before disappearing for ever, assumed grotesque or monstrous forms. From the standpoint of the cosmos, the activity of the thinker pure and simple has always stood for a kind of intellectual Onanism. Now it must be admitted that it is just this lack of direct relation to the world which has allowed the intellect to realize all its potentialities. But even in Kant's time the critical point was reached when it became patent that thought, left to itself, would no longer lead to further progress. So from this time we have seen the German type destined in history to be dignified by the name of thinker being completed and brought to perfection : Goethe the radical realist. From the time of Kant and Goethe every man might have foreseen what the present book teaches : that man is not a monad but a 'relation' between Self and the Universe : that only a process of polarization with alien elements can set in motion the process of growth or of accretion ; that man from any positive point of view does not exist alone, and that it is just from the starting-point of aspiration after philosophic knowledge that the necessity arises for being open to all the world without restriction, and for giving up the idea of any construction which would have as its basis nothing but the crustacean isolation of the speculative thinker. Because all this is so, these modern thinkers, who in the eyes of so many march at the head of the forces of progress, really represent a falling back into an outlived state of things ; they represent forms of retrogression as they appear typically, during the transition period, at all epochs of general rejuvenation. At that stage of the history of the human mind in the dawn of which we are living, *no problem is any longer set as the thinker alone sets it*. To-day it is only by means of an integral revelation to which a radically realist spirit opens himself wholly, not

with his mind only, but with absolutely all his functions from his entrails to his skin, from his mineral being up to pure spirit, that this new *Truth* can be attained, which will express the true and exact relation between the Self and the Universe as it actually obtains at this stage of Man's evolution. All the definitions, all the postulates, all the imperatives, laid down by thinkers are devoid of any importance whatever, unless they represent the genuine expression, or else the projection, or finally the precipitate, of an *integral experience* of the world.<sup>1</sup>

THE LIMITS OF A CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD conformable to its significance may now easily be traced in their main outlines, and in so doing the chief features of the philosophic task laid upon the future will be indicated. The primary objective which every man desirous of comprehending must henceforth pursue is almost diametrically opposed to that of the century of enlighten-

<sup>1</sup> The last German philosophers who, in virtue of a vital polarization with the exact sciences like that which inspired Kant, have attained notable results are, in my opinion, Driesch and Scheler. The former, from the standpoint of biology, has given us an essential work in the direction of radical realism. Scheler, in point of really superior gifts, was distinguished only by an extraordinarily mobile and acute intelligence, but most unlike Luther, whose magnificent 'I can no other' is well known, he 'could' almost anything whatsoever, deprived as he was of a spiritually central line, which would have had its foundation in creative being. But Scheler was, on the other hand, a demoniac nature with a rare capacity of inward experience. That is why the line of his spiritual life is, though broken, singularly significant. Max Scheler represents much more than the mere sum of his intelligent reflexions and his ingenious theories: in the depths of himself he was a being of an outstanding wealth of sensibility, of a rare emotional profundity, but, on the other hand, an unfortunate who felt himself assailed by all the evil powers of this world, and who was, as very few modern men are, homesick for salvation. It was the profundity of his being and not the thinker in Scheler which made him so outstanding in an epoch distinguished for infelicity. As for the most recent German thinkers, they are, as ontologists or philosophers of being, without any direct relation to the world about which they talk. More than one of them has, in other respects, as psychologist, as historian, or as critic, given to the world a work which counts. Their philosophy, properly so-called, is a product of despair. There

ment: its task is to free the Spirit from the confining barriers and scaffoldings which have been erected, not this time by the irrational functions, but by reason and intelligence themselves. Western man is to-day, in his conceptual refinements and their practical application in programmes and institutions, as much a prisoner as the man of the Middle Ages was in his unreasoned faith based upon the emotional order. The best minds among the revolutionaries of the twentieth century are labouring to throw down these barriers and clear away these scaffoldings, and in this lies the positive side of the hostility to intelligence manifested in the revolt of the earth-forces (*Révolution Mondiale*, I). But besides the fact that in this we are already sinning through excess of zeal, this destruction of barriers does not, by itself alone, end in any positive renewal, and may only too easily lead to a temporary restoration of states of affairs which the vanguard of humanity left behind them long ago. The potential positive aspect of the negative phenomena which to-day take up almost the whole of our field of vision is very different: it opens up the way to the Integral Revelation. It is only by opening himself

they are, look at them, based on their thought alone, abandoned, uprooted, 'flung,' as they say, into an alien world, in anguish and void. Their philosophy is the purest expression I know in history, of a true masturbation of reason. No concrete, authentic, sincere experience of the world *can* lead to a theory according to which the world would be 'projected' out of a purely subjective sphere of existence into a destiny which would be congenitally alien to it, and according to which there would exist no original relation between existence and the world, according to which also anguish would be the original attribute of Being, etc. All these theories are products of a speculation whose origin is exclusively intellectual. The so-called existential philosophy has *only one* positive significance: that of preparing the way for a new direct realization of metaphysical reality, a realization which for a time had been rendered impossible by the fact that man was concentrating his attention exclusively on the world of objects. In this respect, then, the existential philosophy stands for an embryonic phase. But no man has the right to speak of existence with authority but the man to whom existence has been *revealed*, revealed as intimate experience, not as the product of reflexion and abstraction: the man whose metaphysic is 'life in the shape of knowing' as I expressed it more than thirty years ago (*Prolegomena zur Naturphilosophie*). Now this is not true, so far as I know, of any 'existential philosopher's' metaphysic.

completely to the world and not by shutting his eyes to an unpleasing reality that man will succeed in creating new conceptions of the world which will correspond to the existent moment of history and of the cosmos.

Let us now bring into the fighting-line the last and most important argument against all systems of philosophy. By definition a conception of the world *can* only, and consequently *ought* only, to be exclusively personal, that is to say an intrinsic conviction. The epoch when objectivity was the determining factor is quite gone past. It was no doubt inevitable that man, when once his intelligence was set free, should begin by distinguishing too forcibly between objective truth and subjective truthfulness, so that 'the truth' might quite well appear to involve nothing personal. This was inevitable because this emancipation had been carried out from the starting-point of absolute belief in a plan of salvation willed by God, a belief which had then the same self-evident character as the recognition of natural facts without discussion has for us to-day. This primitive religious belief is dead historically. And so the horrible formula 'without prejudice on our side and remaining entirely free' has managed to become for a time the motto of all thinking white mankind. In France this caricature of true freedom of spirit has often taken the particular form that freedom of spirit has been understood as freedom to remain sceptical, as freedom to not-believe (especially where inconvenient truths are concerned), or as freedom to remain the captive of intellectual prepossessions. On the other hand—only another variant of the same caricature—freedom of Spirit has become for many Frenchmen the imperative obligation to adhere unreservedly to partisan propositions of some kind opposed to the formulas officially or traditionally recognized. It is in the first variant of this caricature of the true freedom of Spirit just outlined that one of the most important causes of the existent demoralization is to be found, and this in its turn gets the benefit of the second variant, that



is to say of the inclination to go back to fixations long since left behind. Now if salvation is never to be found in demoralization and anarchy, no more is it ever to be found in renewal of a former state. When I founded the School of Wisdom I published (1919) a manifesto entitled *The Union between Soul and Mind* (Was uns not-tut—was ich will), printed in *Creative Understanding*, the fundamental idea of which was this : Spirit and soul need to be united anew, that is to say what exists objectively on the plane of Spirit and what belongs to our intrinsic subjectivity must be fused in a new psychochemical synthesis. And my first lecture at the inaugural session of this same school (23 November 1920) bore the title ' Culture of Being and Culture of Capacity ' (*Creative Understanding*). The fundamental idea which I developed in it was that the time was gone by when the only values recognized were impersonal technical capacity, and ability to do work as measured by a purely objective standard : from now onwards what would decide would be the level of the living Being. At the moment when I write these lines we are already clearly much nearer this goal than sixteen years ago : nevertheless a good fifteen years at the very least will have to elapse before my programme of that date can become an actuality. But the date at which my forecast will be realized matters little : even the most distant future belongs, without a shadow of doubt, to the man who thinks for himself, takes his responsibilities upon him of his own accord, who integrates into his own personality all that is external, imparts life to it all, and gives a soul to everything from his intrinsic personality. Thus in the man to whom alone the future belongs, Being and Knowing, Existence and Belief, Creative Significance and Life, Meaning and Expression, Truth and Truthfulness will correspond completely. The epoch when the divided personality of the intellectual was recognized as a value has now already passed away. A new man, more personal, more authentic, more truthful, is on the point of gaining spiritual

ascendancy. Once established in this ascendancy he will never give it up again.

Already the battle is joined. Undoubtedly we shall see everything that was merely opinion and not realization of intrinsic Significance go under in this struggle. But so much the better. It is a fact which is often considered one of the most distressing signs of our age, but really proves to be one of the most certain benefits in the whole history of humanity: in the collectivist interregnum Spirit free and independent is and will be compelled to struggle for its very existence, to struggle fiercely, bitterly, and sometimes desperately. The spiritual decadence of the West proceeds chiefly from the fact that Spirit for the last century and a half has enjoyed too much comfort and ease, that it has no longer had to struggle for life at all, that nothing or almost nothing has compelled it to take stock of the seriousness of its problems, that nothing has any longer affected it with any greater intensity than is expressed by the word 'interesting.' This age of ease is gone by; on the whole of our planet the old struggle for freedom is beginning over again. And it is just on this account that all the stars in our sky are foretelling a new era, great and deeply spiritualized, determined by sovereign personality, the first era of the true reign of Spirit.

SOLITUDE

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WHEN, IN PLANNING THIS BOOK, I BEGAN TO REFLECT on the problem of loneliness, the beginning of a German song kept on running in my head :

‘ Lonely am I, not alone.’

The poet meant something quite different from what I am purposing to enlarge on here : none the less, I might put these words as the motto of this essay. I cannot imagine how a man could ever feel alone. At most it could only happen in the midst of indifferent people, because the consciousness of indifference does isolate. The more solitary a man is outwardly, the less, not the more alone he is, for the more rich and distinct the world of his inner images becomes. If prophets and anchorites used to withdraw into the desert, this was not to be alone, but to give themselves up to the contemplation of visions. In the same way many men seek social intercourse to escape from the images which haunt them. Often it seems to me that the outer world, be it illusion or reality, but certainly Maya in the sense the Hindus understood it, was created originally to assure man of a place where he could take refuge from the gruesome wealth of fauna which people his soul. At other times I think that the so-called objective reality owes its origin not to a process of realization, but to one of unrealisation : only that which has ceased to live, is definitely settled,

and clearly outlined, can be grasped and held fast. When I was five-and-twenty, one night this sentence came into my head : ' Only the man for whom the world has become a dream can lay firm hold on reality.' It is the inner world undoubtedly which decides at all times and places in the last resort. And the prototype of all inner reality is for man the dream.

What reveals itself in dreams is a coherent manifold. Not one which is logically coherent, nor ordered in a causal series, nor to be taken in at a glance. Hence the idea of original chaos, of which the following fragment of Empedocles gives the most striking and gruesome picture :

Many a head was there which grew on no neck,  
And severed arms straying without their shoulders,  
And eyes which floated lonely without a forehead.

But we know to-day that the world of dreams corresponds to a reality on the psychic plane, just as ovum and embryo do on the physical one. Thus we understand better what Schiller meant when he claimed that the poet is the only real man. From the depth of the poet's soul new creatures are ever being born, which are always himself and yet other than himself. In the most poetical of all poets, in Shakespeare, the border-line is reached : that veritable ' no-man's-land ' where beyond all human creativity that which is divine and demonic begins. Shakespeare was a border-line man in this sense, that a whole cosmos spoke through him, and evidently he himself as an empirical being did not, even from a distance, seem nearly so important as he was as a poet : how else could it have come to pass that people are fighting tooth and nail about his very existence ? On the one hand he was like the Christ of the myths, who in the weak and lowly form of man was supposed to have been God, but on the other hand like a pure medium, and we shall never be able to make up our minds which of the two images he

resembles more. Shakespeare, we are inclined to say, among his other characters, also invented the man called William Shakespeare, whom he created life-size in flesh and blood, but who was not one of his most successful personages. He was only of all his characters the most wooden, the stiffest, and the least life-like. As for the soul which gave birth to so many worlds, it must beyond all doubt have been a cosmos and not a human individual, a breach in the wall, as it were, through which burst in that reality which we have elsewhere called the humanity in man. This is why that supreme reality expressed itself in Shakespeare in the shape of a series of dramas in which all the characters are as necessarily interconnected as if they were facets of one and the same diamond. Of such a connection we have a coarsened reflection in real life in the necessary correlation of types in different professions which all condition each other. From this point of view one may go so far as to say that history is nothing but an unfolding of visions such as Shakespeare had. Have not the greatest moments in history always been dramatic instants of as artistic a kind as if a poet had arranged the sequence of them? In this sense it may be that the real Trojan war was fought out between the gods. However this may be, the saying of Heraclitus is eternally true: 'The bounds of the Soul thou canst not find out, nay, even though thou treadest every road; so deep a ground hath she.'

So far as this book goes, the essential part of what I have tried to call up in the soul of my readers rather than materialize it myself is this: as every man forms part of a vast external reality which stretches far beyond him, so inwardly he belongs to a reality similarly vast. It is difficult to say exactly where man's nature stops in an external direction, for a vast part of the external world belongs to him indissolubly, just as for echinoderms and coelenterates the sea plays the same part which the blood does in our own organisms, and on the other hand the major part of our nature proper is constituted by the

non-Ego. It is still more difficult to trace these same lines of demarcation inwardly. For in the psychic sphere man is formed of such manifold strata, is the dwelling-place of such heterogeneous fauna, the transitions are so gradual, and yet in spite of this, consciousness is such a unified field, that it is impossible to reach a comprehensive view of the whole, and to discriminate exactly. It is beyond all doubt that the greater part of what occurs to a man does not have its source in his own personality ; through the medium of his Unconscious he communicates with much, if not with the whole of what is living at the same time as himself ; he communicates moreover with much of what has lived in the past : thus every man is *also* the medium for alien forces. These alien forces constitute, in part, real subjects unconnected with the subject proper of the individual concerned. They are subjects in precisely the same sense as the externally given 'Thou' is, with whom also we can only communicate inwardly, by means of a comprehension of the alien soul which can never be rendered comprehensible. Then infra-individual energies and essences speak to the soul or through it, so clearly that in reality one is often inclined to say with Lichtenberg, 'To accept the Ego and to postulate it is a practical necessity.' Nevertheless Lichtenberg was wrong. The empirical Ego is a perfectly determinate and clearly defined Organ in man with an independent centre : at bottom it is a complex as the psycho-analysts understand it ; a cluster, generally over-emphasized, of definite instincts and impulses. But this makes no difference to its independence : if the Ego has to be overcome, it must first, so far as it is a centre, in reality die. And so this *Self* with which the man ultimately identifies himself, this same *Self* towards which, so far as he aspires at all, he aspires all his life, this *Self* which in origin is outside him, as voice or felt vocation, as demon or as spiritual guide, this *Self* is, from the point of view of him who experiences, an absolutely ultimate centre to which everything refers in the last resort,

which coincides with no other centre, and can be no farther deduced. It is of this *Self* that the line of the song is true :

‘ Lonely am I, not alone.’

Man has still less chance of being alone in psychic space than in corporeal space. Without this, fear of his own mental images would not be man’s basic moving force. This is why the ultimate problem of personality is for each man the problem of his personal loneliness. And this latter is as infinite as his not-aloneness.

**T**HIS LONELY SELF IS BY NATURE PURELY SPIRITUAL. Others feel it generally in a man sooner than he does himself. It is only in those whose personality has reached its final perfection that the Self governs the empirical man as a whole, so entirely that he seems formed throughout by his deepest essence, like an antique bronze which has issued from the spirit of the artist. And it is only in maturity that consciousness and the Self coincide. But the Self shines already in germ in the eyes of the newborn baby. It constitutes the uniqueness of the man. At first absolutely unconscious, visible only to others, it expresses itself later on throughout long stages, in a passive mode of being, as of one who reacts, not who acts : here, too, he does not know originally what he wants, what he ought to do, what he thinks, what he is. And afterwards, when the first direct self-consciousness awakens, it often happens that the fear of loneliness urges him to renounce his individuality by sinking himself in the community. But as foundation and as ground-plan of the man, the Self is there from the very outset, not, it is true, as a realized state of fact, but as a centre of force. This Self ‘ directs ’ the life, however little the latter may

feel it. It directs it in the same way as the invisible sketch-plan which governs the development of the ovum and the embryo. And its original qualities are uniqueness, loneliness, creative initiative, and capacity to evolve and transform itself.

The uniqueness of which I am here talking, and which as reality in the last resort alone comes under consideration, has nothing to do with being different from other men, though it shows itself by means of this difference : uniqueness does not consist in relation to any person or thing ; it exists in and for itself. What merely distinguishes one man from another is always superficial : he who insists on what is peculiar to himself alone is only shutting himself up in the prison of his Ego. Whoever has attained to consciousness of his Self never compares himself to others, he is indeed incapable of setting up such a comparison, for as Self he is just as essentially incomparable as on lower planes he is essentially comparable. As a unique being he can no longer receive, he can only bestow. That is to say even when he receives it is his radiance which ultimately decides. In this sense it might be said that the Self is pure and original initiative. Its initiative is just as great when it does not set problems but answers them, when it does not create but comprehends, for inward responses and realizations, too, spring from the Self and can be referred to nothing but this Self. The Gana is inert, the emotional order is the sphere of passion which causes suffering, the soul can at will be influenced and transformed from without : the Self is neither inert, nor passive, nor to be influenced in any way except by stimulating its own free initiative. And this latter decides always in conformity with the Self. This is because the Self is just pure spiritual nature and so far it is essentially free, initiative and creative. It is solar, and for this reason not to be farther deduced from telluric or lunar premisses. As the process of the break-in of Spirit into the telluric world is effected by stages, it is clear that everywhere in Nature phenomena



of more or less direct participation are to be met with.<sup>1</sup> Spirit in-forms itself everywhere whenever the Gana is receptive and plastic enough to admit of being formed by it. Fairy tales tell us of animals which talk : there are certainly some which possess mediumistic gifts and understand unconsciously. And the *principium individuationis* which properly belongs to telluric life is for Spirit the appointed means of embodying its uniqueness, which, I say once more, is expressed in ever clearer outlines in proportion as the Gana is more plastic. So highly gifted races ripen more slowly than those which are only moderately endowed ; this means that in their younger representatives they remain plastic longer : thus the higher races, as Gustave le Bon has shown, are distinguished by this characteristic fact, that they produce a greater number than others of higher individualities which do not find their place within the type. For the unique individual always falls outside the general sketch plan of the species, more accurately he belongs to no species, because his existence has its governing centre above the plane of any species. Hence his ultimate, his immeasurable, his unfathomable loneliness.

At the moment when the fusion of the Self with consciousness begins is born that appalling fear which casts its spell over all, this fear which characterises all early human beings or those which have renewed their youth in a new primitive state. For primitive man experiences the Self as half within and half without him ; on the one hand he is conscious of being sheltered in the bosom of the collective, on the other he has lost this consciousness. Hence this frenzied flight into the collective life, the norms of which could never be too rigid, and at the same time into a system of objectified representative relationships, of rites, cults, and myths, the end of which is to protect the lonely man against his own inward images and make him forget his loneliness. This transposed Original Fear

<sup>1</sup> The chapter ' The break-in of Spirit ' in the *Meditations* treats of this in detail.

is from the animal point of view, the differential characteristic of man. It is just because he has no need of such a transposition, that the animal seems to primitive man better protected and more highly placed in the hierarchy of beings, more worthy of veneration than himself. The fear of loneliness can indeed disappear only after the fusion of the Ego—or more generally of the temporary personal centre of consciousness—with the Self. Then the fear of loneliness ceases automatically, for loneliness is for the Self a frame of life as normal as life in common is for the Ego. A process of continuous transformation leads up to this end and its peculiar nature proves beyond all doubt that the Self is of another essence than the Ego, and this original essence of the Self is what in the last resort matters for the man because it is this which constitutes his intrinsic personality. For the process of transformation in question takes place exclusively by means of a series of personal decisions. Nothing happens of itself alone. The deepest Self, as end attainable on our earth, is at once self-begotten and self-borne: ever the new-born child of its own actions, it is born and grows by means of a series of metamorphoses, passed through one after another. Hence the peculiar significance of the necessity for clearing one's road in life with a high hand. It is a mistake to say of an individual, who ends by proving himself a great man, that those who opposed him made a mistake. They were not mistaken in any way, for he became a great man only by his victory, by the work he accomplished, his greatness till then having been only potential. As for this very potentiality of greatness its enemies have misunderstood it less than the crowd of those who are indifferent. The spontaneous defensive movements, apparently exaggerated, which every truly great man provokes so long as he is in process of becoming one, these movements which persist up to the day when he has inwardly conquered their souls, signify that his enemies know very well that 'some great one is about to be born'; it is the story of the massacre of the

infants of Bethlehem over again. There are very few men whose will to power willingly puts up with a shifting of the existent state of forces. As for the man who aspires to the realization of his Self, he absolutely cannot dispense with these hindrances : it is in measuring himself against them, never before, that the Self as force manifested and actualized comes into being. Whether it is a question of statesmen, artists, or saints, the case remains exactly the same. The man of action becomes great literally by his acts, that is a fact which has been so regularly observed for so long that the expression 'his position has been the making of him' has become a commonplace. Let us imagine Frederick the Great, without opposition, without adversity, without blows of Fate : he would never have become the man we know. It is just for this reason that the great man *seeks for* the difficulties he needs ; when they do not come in his way of their own accord, he provokes them. This was why Frederick the Great started the wars in Silesia. It is an utter mistake to seek the creative force in what comes to affect a man from without : experience of life, opposition, adversity. All faith in Providence founded on this idea is (as we shall show explicitly in the chapter 'Freedom'), to put it plainly, a gross superstition, the motive force of which is to free the man from his ultimate responsibility. Nearly all men meet as many difficulties and opportunities as those which have become creative in the case of great men—only these set nothing going in them. Everyone needs stimuli from without, opportunities, tasks to accomplish, opposing objects to deal with, hindrances, pretexts, external ends put before him in order that his freedom may awaken and rise to the level of his highest activity. For it is on freedom alone that every accent of importance rests. Outside difficulties in the literal sense are necessary for the man of action in every case, for they alone supply him on the one hand with the material he needs, on the other with the vitalizing stimulus. For those who are called to spiritual greatness—in the philosophical as well

as in the religious sense of the word—it is otherwise only if one looks no farther than the plane of phenomena : viewed according to its significance, the situation is identical. Men of imagination and thought realize themselves from one work to another. Each of these works is the expression of an inward decision, and this materializes, so to speak, a fresh point of departure. But, moreover, the battle which a man has to wage to get himself acknowledged by others, calls up ever anew his own deepest powers ; it steels them, makes them concrete, gives them a direction, forces them into clearness, and ever stricter determination. The path of a great religious spirit and of a saint do not lead from work to work : they lead direct to the deepest realization of the Self. For the great man of this kind his struggle is not against the world nor even within the world, for its conflicts do not affect him—nor does he seek to produce an effect by his work : he wrestles only against the dark alien forces which dwell within him, till he becomes transparent to the radiance of pure spirit. Tradition has handed down to us the following beautiful story about Confucius : One of his disciples noticed three furrows on the master's forehead, one small, another medium-sized, the third deep and gaping wide, and he asked him the reason of the difference. Confucius replied : ' The little furrow is the memory of the time when life tossed me like flotsam, now here, now there. The medium one I owe to my faithless friends. The deep one I dug myself wrestling with the evil forces of my soul.' But every victory gained means not only that a decision has been taken, but that the victor himself has become another man. To realize one's Self means nothing else than this change of personality.

There are often chances so wonderful that they seem providential which lead thus through strife and adversity to the birth of the Self. These chances cannot always be explained by the fact that a great man himself chooses them from among others : no doubt they often ' happen ' to him, they ' overtake ' him, without his having done,

even in thought, the smallest thing to bring them about. This, on the one hand, depends on the special kind of fate which I have explicitly described and interpreted in the *Meditations*, the prototype of which is the fate of the eel. Without the intervention of certain determinate accidents, which do not necessarily arise, a definite fate is not fulfilled. In such cases we may say that history preserves only the memory of those who have not fallen by the roadside. But we do not, expressing ourselves thus, make clear the whole state of facts : there are some men who literally 'have luck,' and others who plainly are dogged by misfortune. In the case of all the adventurers who have ended by becoming statesmen, the fact that at certain critical moments they had luck—a fact which cannot be accounted for by anything else—has been decisive. A fact so striking that, in the eyes of the men of antiquity, luck was in some sort a pronounced aptitude, a power granted by fate as a favour. So much so that in one of the primæval Caucasian languages there is only one word to mean both luck and courage. So from the point of view of the Spirit there certainly is such a thing as pre-ordained fate—but only those share in it as active subjects who are the embodiment of creative Spirit. This fated character of Life determined by Spirit no great man has ever doubted, for only the notion of Fate provides anything like an adequate instrument to account for the unique and unrepeatable situations without which he could not have become what he did. They cannot be understood at all within the scheme of the laws which govern all earthly events. To my mind the first approximation to an intelligible interpretation of this state of things has been given by P. D. Ouspensky in his *Tertium Organum* in the shape of the following metaphor : 'Events run their course as if Life proper were moving in a fourth dimension while man is only capable of thinking in three. This may be illustrated by saying that man while he really moves about among pyramids, cubes, and cylinders, only notices the points where these cut the plane surface of

his experience. As such, these points of intersection naturally do not form a system : hence the impression of being accidental, due to luck or favour, given by just the essential events of a life.' Another characteristic of the essence of life has been summed up by Jacob Böhme in the following commandment : ' Where the road is steepest, thither bend they steps : what the world refuses, that take thou upon thyself ; what the world will not do, that do thou. Walk contrary to the world in all things. Thus by the shortest road shalt thou attain to God.' The becoming and growth of spiritual personality is governed by other laws than those which rule the earthly reality we can experience. The closest connection that can be established between Earth and Spirit is to all appearance this : the greatest tension with the forms of earth—as given by the concepts luck, chance, difficulty, adversity—best furthers the realization of Spirit. So, starting from these connexions which appear most mysterious, we reach most quickly the central problem of the essence of spiritual personality, and so the determination if not the solution of it. Spiritual personality is a force which acts on its own special plane. And it acts in the way which, from time immemorial, has been distinguished—no matter in what words—in contrast to other modes of action, as *magical*.

The essence of magical action consists in the fact that *Spirit acts directly* without the intervention of material forces or media. This sentence indicates that it is *not* suggestion which decides here, however considerable its share is as a rule. The bare possibility of suggestion rests on the correspondence of certain active forces of soul or Gana in the suggester with certain passive, or merely weaker, forces in the recipient, who vibrates under the influence of the former, just as one string vibrates when another sufficiently near and similarly tuned has been forcibly struck. Here there is no question of a free decision of the personality, but of compulsion, subjection. The suggester forces and seduces the subject he dominates

up to the limit of complete subjection. Forces which act by suggestion belong, at best, to the lower regions of soul, most frequently they belong to man's under-world. This is why the prototype of the suggester is not the guide, but the seducer. The lowest and most worthless of men has at his command often a very considerable amount of suggestive force : nay more, it is precisely this man who has at his command often the largest amount of such force, because he knows how to awaken and set vibrating in sympathy with him the base and criminal impulses which exist suppressed in every man. The most recent and symptomatic example of this type of man is presented at this crisis by Ivar Kreuger. But the most striking examples are furnished by religious charlatans ; from earliest times they have over and over again found enthusiastic and fanatical adherents whose faith nothing could shake. Such people are usually religiously gifted. But their power over men rests on powers of fascination which belong to the spheres of Eroticism,<sup>1</sup> of lust for power, or of craving for protection against Original Fear. For the rest they seduce by playing upon the mechanism of longing for salvation. The specific nature of magical action on the other hand, I repeat, consists in the fact that in it what is genuinely Spiritual works directly and without any exercise of material force. Here naught of soul acts, naught of Gana, naught of the under-world ; in it Significance as substance acts directly. In children and animals the possibility of such action shows itself in

<sup>1</sup> To this order likewise belongs the special power which a man gains by *not* using the devotion of women for erotic purposes. Women are so firmly convinced they are irresistible that the priest's vow of celibacy impresses them as a proof of superhuman strength. Many men exercise an influence over women for the simple reason that, from motives of prudence, they resist them. There are even men notoriously impotent who gain by the same psychological accidents. This was the case of Hausser—the German post-war psychopath, who, in spite of debauchery with masses of women so shameless that it several times landed him in prison, never deceived his devotees, so that the first time Hindenburg was elected President of the Reich, Hausser, then interned in a house of correction, got more than a hundred thousand votes, all from women—and it has also been the case with many other prophets of the same stamp.

its most elementary form : only what is intended produces its effect upon them, never what is expressed. Either they do not understand the latter or they see through it. I have often shown already—and therefore need not do so again—that in the domain of life determined by Spirit the Significance creates the state of facts and not vice versa : that there is a law of correlation between meaning and expression according to which it is only in a perfected expression that meaning attains complete reality. I have, moreover, shown that only the man who in his own person incarnates a meaning can express it, that every manifestation on the plane of phenomena has its origin in the imparting of a significance. The whole phenomenology of the action of spiritual personality as distinct from empirical is contained in these few sentences. The spiritual substance which the personal Self represents acts directly upon substances of the same order : no problem is presented here, for on all planes of reality every real is open to the influence of every other real of like quality. Nor do the norms which regulate these reciprocal influences such as the laws of hierarchy, of spiritual gravitation, of correspondence, of synergy and sympathy present any more of a problem. As for the realities belonging to other planes, spiritual substance calls them up by magic. The word ‘call up’ appears here the most literally exact, for we have all read in fairy tales how spirits can be compelled to appear, and by what words, and it is a question here of a phenomenon which has exactly the same meaning. A phenomenon which externally resembles magnetic attraction or the attraction and repulsion of bodies in analysis by electrolysis. But, at bottom, it is a question of a phenomenon which could not be compared to any natural process, because here it is the purely Spiritual which acts directly upon Nature or else in-forms itself in her without the intervention of any natural agent. This properly miraculous phenomenon is, however, familiar to us all : it is sufficient to think of the way in which our thought finds its expression. This is



so familiar to us that we no longer even notice the miracle : a significance dawns upon us, and this significance in its turn calls up the sentences, words, and letters which correspond to it, material elements which in themselves belong to quite another dimension of the real. The prototype of the action of Spirit on soul is the elementary process described by Coué : the simple *representation* fixed by attention, and therefore a simple image, of itself sets going in the unconscious soul a corresponding process of transformation. To set such a process of transformation going has, in reality, at all times been the object of all meditation, and it is to the same end that every man of great ambition has unwearyingly carried in his heart the goal at which he aims, that is to say he has pondered on it and so has stirred up the forces of his soul by a continuous involuntary action, taking advantage of every opportunity to act in the direction of the desired end.

This potentiality which Spirit has of acting on what is not spiritual is a primary phenomenon and cannot be deduced from anything else. However, granted that a specific receptive capacity is always required, that each soul does not open to every spiritual influence, and that this opening can never be obtained by force, it would be better to designate this phenomenon by the concept of 'correspondence' rather than by that of gravitation, though the psychic process in question undoubtedly presents analogies to what takes place in a gravitation field. It is preferable to employ the concept of correspondence for this reason alone that the medicine of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance had already made use of it in the exact sense in which we here employ it. That the laws of sympathy and antipathy, of compatibility and incompatibility—concepts which mark off particular zones of the wider concept of correspondence—determine the psychic life is patent. But it is the same with what apparently is not living. If a chemical substance can act specifically upon soul, and through it upon Spirit, the

converse is equally true ; the converse is true in principle in every possible domain. And it is here that what is called 'luck' has its roots. Just as there exist men who have 'good hands' with plants and animals, because these latter respond in a sympathetic manner to all their handling, just as certain cooks succeed with all dishes because in some fashion they feel what the dish 'wants to become,' so a man may have luck pure and simple in politics and in business. It is in reality a question here of a sympathetic relation with nature as is shown by the following fact : the man who has this aptitude, when the hour is favourable, infallibly *feels* it. Most certainly the correspondence or sympathy, as determining force or function, exists in the sphere of the soul ; but the latter is, in its turn, accessible to the influence of Spirit, and thus a magical action is possible on all natural processes, thus a magical contact may be established and maintained with all kinds of worlds and events. Nor is this all : Spirit and soul are to a high degree independent of space and time ; to be accurate : in the psychic sphere these dimensions, up to a certain point, do not exist. This is why action at a distance, as opposed to action by contiguity, constitutes no special problem at all. And now we arrive at the main fact, the examination of which concludes this train of ideas, which has led us by implication to a denial of Providence in the connexion in question : *Initiative* always resides in the *Spirit*, in what the Spirit does of itself alone, and not in what happens to it. Do not let us be led into any error by the type of man illustrated by the person in Grimm's Tales who was made rich by a series of lucky chances : in such a man his simplicity and a sort of appealing clumsiness call forth the initiative of others ; he is then in a kind of way the passive subject of luck. A man of this stamp has never become a great man.

It is from this standpoint that we shall grasp the ultimate significance of the necessity for struggle. This latter on the one hand opens the way for magical action. Indeed in order that such action may be possible, it is

indispensable that other men should lay themselves open to it. In all cases then—except in the exceeding rare case of a personality so powerful that it irresistibly forces every man it meets to recognize it, to co-operate with it or to obey it, a personality whose authority acts in such an evident fashion that there exists for it no natural necessity to have recourse to force—in all other cases then, there must first be created in other men a state of expectancy in which they are ready to lay themselves open. And to create this openness and expectancy proof must be given of other qualities: courage, consistency, purity of intention, and faithfulness to one's conviction. But on the other hand magical power is not to be commanded at will. It is not always ready to act, and all those who have relied on it exclusively, have had, willingly or unwillingly, to a greater or less extent, to cheat or make use of trickery. The law of the correlation of Significance and expression must therefore be observed. In conformity with this law it is only a *perfectly* expressed meaning which embodies itself in the phenomenal world as the vehicle of independent and autonomous energy: this is a fact analogous to the other that it is only the adult man, and not the embryo or the child who makes history. But as the means of expression always belong to the external world, man has to conquer them by a struggle: in this it is not the poet but the statesman aspiring to power who represents the prototype.

It is not so in what concerns victory or outward success alone: in conformity with the same law of correlation Significance only perfectly realizes itself in a perfect and completed expression. This means here: that it is only when the spiritual personality is completely developed and expressed on the empirical plane that it is wholly realized and present for the man himself. Now such a realization is impossible without a struggle against the resistance of Nature. Whether this struggle takes place, or has taken place, in an inward or outward direction of the soul, is the same thing not only in itself, but also

so far as the radiation of the personality goes. It is from the saint who no longer knows any external struggle that the most powerful rays proceed. It is not only because of the depth from which they issue that these rays penetrate more deeply, but also because they do not strike any intermediate region which would offer resistance, and because here no defensive action weakens the radiation of Spirit by interference with other rays ; thus this action does not wear itself out nor blunt itself on any resistance. It is true that the saints and the sages, as a general rule, only meet with all the more enmity, because the clearly perceived fact that the force which emanates from them is beyond any possible rivalry, as well as the impossibility of accounting for their monopoly of it, cannot help calling forth the will to destruction pure and simple, of everything which is base. In this respect the German motto : ' Many enemies, much honour ! ' is still more true for the representative of Spirit than for the statesman ; the man who has never been slandered, never persecuted, never held up to ridicule, represents, assuredly, no genuine force. It is no less true that neither action nor suffering belongs to the essence of the saint. It is enough that he *exists*. His *being* is the one and only thing on which all depends. This is what all profound nations have known well in their deepest epochs ; the mere existence of a saint is a blessing ; the mere existence of a hero gives strength and courage ; the mere existence of a great believer creates faith, and that of one who greatly trusts generates confidence. Moreover, it is the silent effortless radiance of deep being which ensures the most powerful action at a distance. This has proved itself true thousands of times, in space as well as in time. The more a man who is the embodiment of Spirit lives remote from others, the more inaccessible he is, the more intimate the depths his radiation reaches. The proverb which says that no man is a prophet in his own country, does not in reality pronounce any unfavourable verdict on the country itself : the spiritual personality of a man being quite a

different thing from his empirical personality, it is *inevitable* that proximity should render his image not more distinct, but, on the contrary, more confused. It is the same with the dimension of Time. There a great Spirit appears close and vivid in proportion to the time which has elapsed since his death. From year to year Goethe is better understood. If in truth the age of gold lies at the very beginning of history, and if the first man has likewise been the greatest, he will be understood only at the last day.

In the case of the great man the fact stares us in the face that it is what is personal and not what is objective that settles the quality and the value of every manifestation. In that period of German history which may be called the age of learned men, the plane of Spirit was considered to be that of the purely objective. This was an absolute mistake which arose from confusion between the living Spirit and its contents externally manifested on a projective plane : now these latter are never more than precipitates, or eliminates, or else instruments of knowledge. But even knowledge *per se* is not a primary expression of Spirit : as has been shown in the *Meditations* the faculty of knowing still belongs to the order of what is earthly. The original forms of Spirit's expression are Courage and Belief, which cannot possibly be represented as anything but emanations of the personal substance. Now we said that the spiritual self is incapable of receiving, it can only give ; this is due to the purely radiating character of its essence. It is just on this that its loneliness primarily depends. Beyond the centre of radiation there exists for what radiates no resort : but the radiation in its turn is an end in itself and consequently disinterested. Thus all links with a non-self are wanting here. It is of a love which springs from this source that Goethe said with justice :

‘ If I love thee, what is that to thee ? ’

A craving for knowledge arising from the same source is wholly free from any self-interest, a courage of the same origin is the courage of pure self-sacrifice, a gift from the same source is pure offering without any desire for return. He who gives and gives himself thus, lives above the plane on which the law holds good that action and reaction are equal and opposite ; his position is above all those who dwell on this plane. That is why the majority of human beings cannot endure generosity and impute the most selfish motives to the generous : it is well known that for the majority of men it is more difficult to accept presents than to give them. It is only when the generosity comes from one whom he recognizes as his superior and consequently reverences, that the inferior can bear it. But in addition to this the need to idealize which lives in every man proves here too that the spiritual personality represents an entity superior to Nature, which every man *should* be able to realize in himself : no one doubts at the bottom of his heart that there *is* a life higher than the values and the contingencies of everyday existence ; in his innermost depths every man is ready to project this inward image on someone : in his inmost heart every man would like to be able to venerate someone. There is certainly the other side of the medal. Men, or the immense majority of them, are extremely exacting, nay even inhuman, to the being whom they idealize, and the smallest disillusionment he causes them rightly or wrongly, has to be cruelly paid for : in granting that he is their superior they make, from the point of view of human nature, such an enormous concession to him that as soon as they scent the smallest trace of deception all the demons in their under-world are unchained, howling ‘Crucify him.’ This is the cause of nearly all deception : the people who dare to give the lie to illusions are few and far between. Of all men who continue to live idealized, perhaps Jesus alone—so far at least as tradition allows us to judge—Jesus who offended against all the prejudices of the Jews, Jesus who broke the law of the

Sabbath, who drank wine, who associated with publicans and adulteresses, and gave way to fits of anger, Jesus alone, perhaps, was wholly sincere. On the contrary, among the countless men who try to justify to themselves the halo of idealization with which loving women surround them, and who do it to try to keep alive a flattering image of themselves, nearly all, with rare exception, give way to the most contemptible deception.

But let us pass on. What is true of the great Spirit is true on some level of every man. Every man is, in germ at any rate, a unique personality. Every man is, in principle, capable of salvation, which means capable of attaining to the final illumination, the final transparency. And the final court of appeal for every man is his uniqueness, his personal loneliness. Now the field of force created by these unique natures is the sphere proper of human life. All the rest belongs, from the point of view of depth, to the external world ; all the rest might be different, without making much difference in the man. That is why the moving forces not of all history alone, but also of all personal life, as described in novels, may be, in the last resort, reduced to a comparatively restricted number of persons. It is never the collectivity which decides, nor the people, nor the mob, nor a class, nor society : it is always spiritual personalities who decide in conformity with their specific weight. As long as certain men exist at all, no matter whether their action is visible or not, events come to pass differently from what they otherwise would. Personalities superior to the rest assert themselves and impose themselves on others in spite of all objective consideration and all objective proof. We may reject them as much as we like, we may even prove their futility, they are none the less living forces. We may get rid of them in any way we like, they will always be outstanding as long as they have not met with personalities stronger than themselves on the same plane.

As opposed to all that is empirical and objective

spiritual personality is indeed the stronger power which always wins the day. It proves its strength most particularly when it is evil, and when it has against it all the recognized norms : then it appears in a striking fashion that living Spirit is of greater significance, not merely than matter alone, but even than any value objectified on a projective plane. That is why at all crises of history, murder has always been the final argument—it has been so in just the same way as war is the final argument in politics. There is in truth no other means of stripping a genuine spiritual personality of his power but to cut him off from the number of the living. It is here that we see what an enormous conquest the last centuries gained when murder was, for consciousness, excluded as a positive possible solution : it meant a giving up of life on the part of the underworld in favour of Spirit. And it is from this standpoint that we understand clearly in what sense Christ, when He taught the infinite value of every human soul, and commanded to love one's neighbour as oneself, that is to say, as a unique personality, established a new epoch, and why it is impossible that humanity should ever for long fall back into the pre-Christian stage. In Christ humanity gained consciousness for the first time, *but also for ever* of what it is that makes man truly man. That is to say, of the spiritual personality, unique in every case, which lives in every man. The anti-Christian character of our epoch is, however, not such a serious evil as it appears. It does not spring from base motives ; it represents on the contrary a reaction against a baseness, namely, the confusion between love of one's neighbour as Jesus understood it and recognition of the demand according to which every man would have a right to the greatest possible material well-being and to an unbridled expansion of his self-love. The demand of Jesus in no way concerns the empirical plane. Jesus taught that we must slay the Ego, not nourish it in comfort, even though it were in order to sacrifice it later. Death, as such, he did not take tragically in the least, for



it signified for him the threshold of a new life. And, as a matter of fact, no man conscious of his Self has ever taken death as a tragedy. If the Ego is nothing essential, if it may be renounced altogether without any lessening of the Self, then Death likewise is nothing essential ultimately, for only the Ego is afraid of it. And in reality every man who is conscious of his Self pledges and hazards his life readily. Here, where it is a question of what is most elementary, the warrior is the symbol which holds good for every man. Just as the warrior sacrifices his Ego, so every man dominated by Spirit sacrifices the empirical part of himself to an existence situated on a higher plane. For him it is self-evident that his mission is of more importance than his everyday life, for this mission and its fulfilment belong more intimately to his personal life than anything in him which has issued from the earth. This is why the privileged place which the hero occupies among all ideal types is the most natural thing in the world. Natural, not because the hero sacrifices the most precious thing he possesses for love of his people and his country, but because he asserts that he belongs entirely and exclusively to the spiritual world. In his inmost depths the hero is not the man most closely attached to the community but, on the contrary, the most lonely of men.

Here again it is the Hindus who have had the deepest comprehension of this truth. We have sketched the monumental prototype—image of the hero to make it clear to every one that there exists something higher than our own life. But the Upanishad elevated the personal life of each man to the rank of a symbol of equal importance. It teaches us that ‘It is not for love of the husband that the husband is dear ; it is for love of the Self that the husband is dear.’ We have seen in *Problems of Personal Life* that the tie of marriage is by nature spiritual, and belongs to the spiritual plane : so we understand without further explanation the ultimate significance of marriage ; it, too, is a realization of the Self. Now the wisdom of

the Hindus teaches further that marriage as a norm of life on earth ought to be a preparation for—loneliness. According to it man ought to pass through all stages : to be truly child, chaste and obedient disciple, husband and father conscious of his responsibilities ; the man who does not expend his whole earthly energies so as to fulfil his mission on earth completely, will never, without extraordinary spiritual gifts, become ripe for union with Spirit. But when once he has got a grandchild then, but only then, he *ought* to free himself from all these ties, and set out, a pilgrim with no native country, for the forests, to attain the consciousness of his ultimate loneliness and to realize himself in it. In reality, from the point of view of all that belongs to earth, the Self is absolutely lonely. But it is at the same time the most deeply personal possession man has. It is the one and only vehicle of all values. And only this lonely Self can share in immortality.

**M**EN, FOR THE MOST PART, HAVE TREMENDOUS difficulty in becoming conscious of their complexity and of the multiplicity of their constituent strata, tremendous difficulty above all in recognizing this complexity and this multiplicity. And yet there exists no other road to Salvation, no other means of attaining a truly personal life. In *Problems of Personal Life* we have considered separately the Not-Self constituted by the body, the different provinces of the impulses arising from man's underworld and the collective ties ; we have studied the emotional sphere of soul and the spiritual bond of marriage. In the Introduction and the first chapter of the present book we have laid down the necessity of a total lived experience of the real and an absolute truthfulness as the primary, and henceforward the only possible, conditions of the realization of Self. Here we are considering the very core of personality, in abstraction from every other element.

It is impossible without a correct anatomy to obtain a correct view of the whole, impossible without a clear knowledge of the Significance proper of each particular plane of life, to construct that higher synthesis which corresponds both to the ideal of truth and to that of truthfulness, that synthesis which every man who is fully awake and conscious of his integral nature pursues by a natural compulsion, conscious or not, as the aim of his life. For in the domain of Spirit and of soul all failure to comprehend creates a corresponding distortion of the facts, every road which is not the only right one leads man away from the personal aim, all misplacing of the accent of importance produces malformations. In what follows it will be just the question of knowing how and where to place this accent of importance which must occupy us. But before examining this question, it behoves us, after having exhibited the inter-connexion of life in simultaneous existence, to form a comprehensive idea of the significance it unfolds. It is only after we have drawn these co-ordinates shall we be able to determine, without any possibility of mistake, the significance of our ultimate loneliness.

We said in *Problems of Personal Life* :

‘In its essence Life is not progressive and the “happy ending” is not its moral aim : life is tragic. A destiny is called tragic when a man cannot be true to himself nor give proof of his better will without coming into conflict with norms which he otherwise recognizes : when he is right to do what he is doing, and fails, conquered by opponents who are not wrong, but just as right as he is. All life, whether individual or collective, finds its exact counterpart in music. Every melody flows on in time, from the past to the future. Not only is every melody, as a whole, a finite entity, but it passes away from instant to instant by a succession of deaths, and this passing from one death to another is the very essence of it, as well as the only

possible course for it. Bichat was right when he gave this definition : " Life is just death," for every instant of life has two aspects : the one signifying growth or construction, and the other destruction or death. And each death is final like that of the sound which is hushed : for if objectively the same sound is heard anew, there is never any question of identity. But, on the other hand, it is just this series of deaths which constitutes the existence proper of the melody. It is exactly the same in life where each " yesterday " must perish and perish for ever in order that " to-day " may be born. Only in life, as soon as the consciousness capable of remembering has awakened, what in music is only form, becomes a terrible and tragic reality. For there is no satisfactory solution of this dilemma : all value in life belongs to what is concrete and unique, but all that is concrete and unique is doomed beforehand to die. There can be no satisfactory solution, seeing that considerations of an objective order avail nothing. In the sphere of life as well as in that of music it is only what is subjective, what is lived, that counts. Just as in the universe of sound an unplayed melody does not exist, so a life which only existed objectively, like a musical score, would not be life. It is not to no purpose that even grammar refers every vital element to the subject.'

So then we may say to sum up : every man lives his own life unique and alone, suffers his own pain unique and alone, dies his own death unique and alone. What concerns other men does not affect him personally except in so far as it creates for him unique values, or casts doubt on them, or destroys them. There is then absolutely no way of escaping his tragic fate but this : *consciously to take the tragedy upon himself and to state all problems entirely afresh from the standpoint of the accepted tragedy of life.*

But only great men and great epochs are capable of this, because it needs the greatest capacity to feel deeply

the life one has to endure, the utmost truthfulness, and an indomitable courage. The belief in progress which has marked the recent centuries has proved this chiefly : the devotees of this new faith were fleeing from to-day toward a to-morrow which man, with no one to gainsay him, could always adorn in the rosiest colours. What does it matter so far as the really personal and terribly serious problems set us at every instant are concerned, that distant generations telephone more easily, travel at a still greater speed, and live on this planet a few short years longer and in better health than ourselves? Who is really so absolutely free from all selfishness that the picture of the well-being of other men can make his own misery bearable to him? Never has such falsehood, such moral cowardice reigned as just in the era of progress. The real motive of belief in progress has nothing whatever to do with an improvement in the condition of men yet unborn to which the living sacrifice themselves in an outburst of generosity : its real motive is simply the irresistible desire to flee from a to-day which is certain to a to-morrow which is imaginary. In the same way the idealization of labour and of unremitting struggle proves, at bottom, nothing better than the need to lull one's conscience at any price. For the man who is slaving like a brute has no time to take stock of what he is, he has not even time to have living experience of his own brutishness. And it is thus that even the over-accentuation of the public welfare, which has become, since the masses have awakened, the mainspring of history, at bottom signifies nothing better than this : to drive the lived personal experience out of consciousness by suggesting the benefit which will accrue to the community from it. But such a suppression could result in nothing but a de-humanization, a retreat towards the ideal of the white ant. It slays the soul *of necessity*, for the human state depends indissolubly on man's personal feeling. Hence the contempt for the personal life in all its manifestations which gives the epilogue of the era of progress such an appalling resemblance to Assyrian life.

But reality cannot be mocked with impunity. A false optimism, a sham altruism, an idealism which was nothing but cowardice in disguise, acting in concert could lead only to this : to make the tragedy of human life appear still more terrible than it had ever appeared before.

I think it is plain now that the process of life can be endured only by the man who is awakened to full consciousness, the man who accepts as the *basis* of life tragedy recognized as such and builds his personal life *on that*. That is the anti-Buddhist solution ; the Buddhist solution, according to which the significance of this life of pain lies in the fact that it can come to an end is, besides the one we are defending here, the only one worth considering, for Buddhism alone among all traditional religions and all schemes of salvation which have come down to us, is based on an absolute truthfulness in the sense of a complete admission by man to himself of the painful reality just as it is. Now what does the fact, that a man accepts the tragedy and builds his personal life on it, mean *in concreto* ? Here again music will supply us with the most comprehensible simile. The man who is listening to music never notices the swift and tragic end of the notes which compose the melody, but only its indissoluble totality realized by means of the birth and death of the sounds. This totality man's intelligence can only assimilate as the 'meaning' of the linked coherence of the empirical elements which form it. Well, in just the same way, the 'meaning' of human life constitutes its deepest reality. What matters, from first to last, is the fulfilment of the vital melody in conformity with this significance. Now this spiritual significance is fulfilled and perfected by means of earthly tragedy.

So then life does not yet become great and profound and beautiful even if man takes upon him the tragedy of life in general, but only when he assents to the tragedy of his own loneliness. Now this is precisely what is most difficult. Difficult above all because the man who is

lonely is never at the same time alone, and so never has any outward occasion to realize his loneliness apart from all relation and without comparing himself with what is not himself. Man is always inclined, whatever attitude he may take up, to feel himself imprisoned within his own loneliness. It is for this reason that even men who have reached a high rank in the scale of being are only rarely freed from fear of their own loneliness. In the immense majority, Original Fear, old as the earth itself, shows itself here even when it has been overcome elsewhere. It is thus that more than one man, after a life of sovereign responsibility, takes refuge all the same, when the end comes, in some church or other, or in some monastery, whose dogmas and rule relieve him in his own eyes of ultimate responsibility, and whose common life, however silent and free from human ties, masks for him his uttermost final loneliness.

THE ULTIMATE INWARD CENTRE TO WHICH ALL PERSONAL life relates is, then, even when this life is attached by the most ardent love to a 'Thou' or to a community, the lonely Self. However great his fear of ultimate loneliness may be, every man yet aspires to it, as the bride longs for the embrace she dreads. *For it is only on the plane of the lonely Self that Fear is resolved.* It is resolved because Fear is the primordial expression of the life of Gana, and because this latter, when the Self has achieved its victorious penetration, is vanquished and made subject by Spirit.

When one thinks of the popularity of the philosophies of Jaspers and Heidegger who represent Fear and Anguish as original attributes of Being, it will be clear that it was necessary to dwell at some length on these facts, although, as all the higher religions prove, all men of any depth have had, from time immemorial, a consciousness of them in accordance with their significance. Fear and dread are

original qualities of life as conditioned by Earth, life which is perpetually threatened and is doomed to inevitable dissolution.<sup>1</sup> But on the other hand it is *only* this earthly part of man which knows Fear and Dread. The more Spirit, whose essence is not of the earth, becomes determinant in man, the more Fear gives way to courage, earthly heaviness to a playful lightness, and sadness to joy.<sup>2</sup> For nothing earthly *can* threaten Spirit in itself; the idea of death looked at from the standpoint of Spirit is devoid of meaning, and earthly conflicts are for it not hindrances but means to the self-realization of the Self. Spirit as substance can no more know care or anguish, for it lays down for itself the law not only of its own action but of its own suffering. Lastly it can know no fear before the end of life, for a Significance cannot die: it can only cease to be manifested in the world of phenomena. So one can measure with mathematical exactness the degree to which a man is Spirit by the standard furnished by the degree and quality of his inward joy. This results on the one hand from the specific nature of Spirit, which according to the Hindu doctrine is at once the Being, Knowledge, and Blessedness, and according to primitive Christian doctrine at once the Love, Wisdom, and Joy, of the blessed soul, and on the other hand from the elimination of all painful themes. So far as the latter are concerned let us add to what we have already said this much: the spiritual Self is not only above the plane of all earthly conflicts, but also above all possibility of *comparison*. For being essentially unique the Self cannot be compared: how then could it know envy which can only arise from comparison? But this lonely, essentially joyous, Self is otherwise never alone: and so what is lonely can of itself draw to itself and relate to itself all things without exception. If the mystic, according to a formula he has often employed, is resolved

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter 'Original Fear' in the *Meditations*.

<sup>2</sup> See the chapters 'Sorrow' and 'Divina Commedia' in the *Meditations*.



and made whole without any fraction remaining, in what alone is Being, this does not mean that he is swallowed like a drop of water in the ocean, but just the reverse : that the drop of water absorbs the whole ocean and itself becomes ocean. This simile is however not quite correct : I have made use of it only because by its current usage it facilitates the necessary union between two terms of thought. In reality unity of Spirit exists in the dimension of pure intensity, and in this dimension alone ; this is why no spiritual unity could do away with any multiplicity whatsoever of any order except the spiritual. The Self, on the contrary, is without any extension. But it directs and orders of itself, as being the deepest living significance of each particular life, its unfolding in the dimensions of space and time. So it is to the tragedy of life in the position of the tragic poet to the tragedy he is creating. He calls up the different particular characters, controls the rigorous counterpoint of the conflicts, gives each action its appropriate significance, which viewed from without can often only be grasped at the end. When this state is once reached, whether a life is 'in itself' happy or unhappy, rich or poor, matters not at all : what alone counts is that a life should fulfil *its own* particular significance. All the accent of importance then is laid on this particular element, on this unique principle, which, whatever be the circumstances, whatever the course of outward fate can, from the point of view of Spirit, be filled with the profoundest significance. Then there exists literally nothing that can deprive life of its significance. Then adversity easily acts as a boon, as an absolute godsend, for infinitely more than anything positive it calls forth the forces proper of Spirit and integrates them into life.

But on the other hand the following proposition is equally true : a successful solution of the problem of life becomes more and more difficult as the horizon of consciousness widens and consciousness itself becomes more differentiated. The man who on each occasion is

entirely possessed by one sole dominating principle of his inner life, such as his instinct for gain, the man who aspires 'to arrive' by material means, as the lover is possessed by his love, the combatant by his will to victory—for this man life, in spite of everything painful and depressing in it, is a problem easy to master spiritually. For in this case it always resolves itself anew. Every Ganic melody is finite,<sup>1</sup> and as soon as it is hushed it is at once forgotten ; man has outlived it. Here the moment one ceases to be in love the problem of love is resolved ; with the end of the war all the passions which kept the war alive soon die out ; all mourning is over as soon as the suffering has lost its sharpness. It is thus that many a Christian martyr wholly possessed by his belief has hardly felt the wild beasts tear him to pieces. The present state of humanity—in spite of all passing movements of reaction, however violent they may be, and however certain to occur—is characterized by the fact that most men's state of consciousness is of a range and lucidity never before known in history. This is why the man of to-day cannot help being or becoming, in an increasing measure and to a degree never before attained, conscious of the *complexity and multiplicity of the strata which constitute his being*. This starts conflicts as old as the hills over again on a new basis, and annuls those solutions of the problem of life which were possible only because they were bound up with conceptions of the world whose premisses made the state of facts simpler or other than it is. It is absurd to maintain that psycho-analysis has had its day on the ground of the mere fact that not all the doctrines of its pioneers can stand criticism : it has had its day in this sense alone, that the fundamental data which it brought to light have become for everybody the historic determinants of premisses so self-evident that no one whose thought deserves to be taken seriously could even imagine how, without psycho-analysis, his lived experience of the world and of himself could have been brought about.

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter 'Gana' in the *Meditations*.

In the same way it is only a sign of blindness to hold that the class-war is left behind from the mere fact that certain new forms of community exclude it—for a long time yet among the majority of Europeans the Ego-consciousness will get the better of the *We*-consciousness. Similarly it is a mark of a very limited intelligence to believe ourselves on the way to a higher type of character simply because everyone takes an interest in theory of character. On the contrary we live in an age when the pathology of the instincts and impulses will inevitably go on spreading. It has always been so in profoundly revolutionary epochs. But otherwise from to-day onwards all those who march in the vanguard of existent humanity see clearly what all great epochs have known, but which many of the greatest spirits about the turn of the century were unwilling to admit : to wit that impulses do not exhaust the sum of human nature. As a personal being man is, potentially at any rate, superior to his impulses ; from the starting-point of his being proper he is capable of mastering and transforming them. Theory of character then deals only with the surface in man and is valuable only in so far as it yields documentary material for the technique of education. Having rediscovered the truth that man's substance proper has its place above the sphere of impulses, we have at the same time again found another truth : in the soul of man much of what lives and thrives does *not* coincide with his personal being. All that ultimately belongs to the man is that for which he has personally decided within himself. An eternal truth which Jesus taught and which every woman who loves deeply has always known and felt about the man she loves : the sinner and evil-doer in him never have the last word ; a conversion to a better and higher state is possible at any instant. In the end everything depends upon the position, freely decided, of the *accent of importance*.

**T**HUS WE HAVE AGAIN ARRIVED AT THE PROBLEM which for this chapter is of decisive importance : the problem of where the accent of importance is to be laid. Man is free to decide to place the accent in himself on this place or on that, this is the primordial and decisive phenomenon in the life of the soul which is conscious of itself, a phenomenon which just for this very reason cannot be deduced from any other or explained more nearly, but must on this account be admitted as a primordial fact. And it is an equally primordial fact that the elements which the man thus accentuates become vitalized ; the accentuation starts a process of growth. The psychic being is not, in point of view of form, of a very different construction from the physical one. There are in man psychic elements which correspond to the brain, others to the heart, others again to the stomach, to the ribs, to the intestine, and to their products. With this difference, however, that in the psychic sphere there are no water-tight compartments, everything is confused and intermingled, no boundary is fixed, no organ is anatomically or physiologically fixed once for all, changes and transformations are possible more fantastic than anything imagined in fairy tales. It is said of such and such a man that he lives for his palate, or for his health, or for his goods, his power, his love, his intellectual interests. If we think that it is possible to lay the whole accent of our lived experience on our bodies or even on a part of them, which thus becomes more conscious and so more vital than usual, and that nevertheless this position of the accent can only directly concern what is psychic, that is to say the idea of the body only—then it stares us in the face that in the domain of the psychic pure and simple literally everything is possible. We can accent in ourselves absolutely everything which exists. Now what is accentuated is elevated into being the

dominant element, and in the long run transforms all the other elements in conformity with its own proper character. For given that all the parts of our psychic being are linked together as integral parts of one whole—though in not nearly so rigid a fashion as those of the body—all vitalization of a particular element conditions a metamorphosis of the others. Hence we perceive clearly the ultimate relation between the elements of the soul and the personal Being. *All originally belong to the not-self with the single exception of the functional centre which lays the accent.* This alone is originally and purely personal. But otherwise this centre may relate everything to itself, embody itself in everything, integrate itself in everything. Thus a man who originally belonged to the intellectual type may, without losing his identity, be transformed into an impulsive, or conversely an impulsive may become an intellectual. The centre may be shifted from one point to another, and each of these shiftings is equivalent to the creation of a new man. As a matter of fact, all evolution in the sense indicated, passes through different phases, and no state exists which cannot by conversion, disruption, or remoulding of the personality, be abruptly changed into a completely different state. It depends solely on the position of the accent of importance and on the growth or diminution which this accentuation has called forth.

This being granted, it is clear that man can, to use the language of Christianity, lose his soul just as well as gain it; that it depends on his own free choice whether he loses his personality so far as to degenerate to the level of the poorest, most insipid, most defaced, most limited, 'thing,' or whether he expands into a personality so rich, that there no longer exists any not-Self which the Self has not incorporated and spiritualized. But what becomes clear to us above all from this standpoint is the final significance of our ultimate loneliness. It signifies absolutely *nothing* negative but, on the contrary, an absolute: man can decide only in a strictly personal way, can

answer only for himself and to himself : there is no court of appeal beyond the Self ; this Self is for consciousness the last possible centre to which all refers, a centre which, in its turn, has no relation to any other thing, and whose loneliness is therefore absolute. It is to this that man's ultimate sense of his deepest identity refers. But in other respects this lonely being within him is never alone. *Now it is to this category of the 'alone' and not to that of the 'lonely' that not only all need for society belongs, but also all that makes the community appear something better in contrast to the individual.*

We have thus, in principle, solved the last difficulty set by the problem of the profound connexion between a lonely Self, and a community which on the other hand necessarily belongs to it. The subjective loneliness and the feeling which corresponds to it are the specific attributes of this centre which is for man the final personal court of appeal. It is only from the starting-point of his personal loneliness that man can have a deep relation to God, to other men, and to the world. On the other hand only the ultimate consciousness of his loneliness creates such a torturing personal problem that the individual discovers his imperious need to open himself to God and to the world. It is then a mistake from beginning to end to think of loneliness as a prison : quite the contrary ; *it and it alone is the gateway to all community with others.* For granted that the personal Self stands for the final inward court of appeal, *absolutely all living relations any being can have can only exist as proceeding from it and never as directed towards it.* To put it differently : *it is only from the standpoint of loneliness that a problem of community with others can arise.* The man then who accepts himself as he is, consents at the same time to his ultimate loneliness, and he who accepts the bond of community with others, can only do so from the standpoint of his own loneliness. Two most important misunderstandings are thus revealed at one stroke. In the first place the lonely man who is afraid of his own loneliness is mistaken from beginning to end as to the real state of facts : *what in him can be afraid*

*is not this lonely element at all, and so is not the last resort of his personality.* What is afraid is, on the contrary, the part in man which must die in order that the personal Self may be established as centre of consciousness: it is a question here of what Jewish theology calls the 'little self.' This, as the chapter 'Sorrow' of the *Meditations* has shown, is the result of the first capture of the Self by the Gana, which, fighting desperately against the loss of its independence, at first keeps the Self prisoner. It is this despair which makes the 'little self' resist so strongly, which renders its fear so intense. The inmost Self, on the contrary, is beyond and above all fear. Thus we understand why the God of the Old Testament, when He showed Himself to His elect said to them first of all, 'Be not afraid,' and why these words awaken, in every man capable of metaphysical experience, such an agitating echo. Secondly, to seek man's ideal and his end in a merging of the individual in the community is to mistake the true place man occupies in the system of the universe. The lonely part of man is the one and only part of him which is in direct union with the universal Spirit: it has then, in itself alone, *much greater value* than have the millions of human beings who have not taken such deep root. Hence the ideals of the genius, of the model man, of the leader, and lastly of the God to whom man must give himself up: all these imperatives rest on the presupposition which follows (I here take only a single example, but it will show the significance of all the others): more than the totality of the citizens and in a deeper sense the leader *is* the nation. He is so just in so far as he is the incarnation of this lonely part which is the deepest ground of the man and whose victory over the other strata of man's nature signifies the ultimate realization of the Self. Through him, by giving themselves up to the example which he signified for them, by meditating on it, and carrying it in their hearts, all may succeed in sharing in their own deepest reality. It is only in so far as the lonely man, who sees in his loneliness his final

personal resort, cleaves entirely with the *other* strata of his being to this collective to which he *de facto* belongs, that he is in-spired and spiritualized from his lonely part. It is only in so far that he can attain to his fulfilment.

WE CAN NOW DETERMINE THE REALITY PROPER AND the particular mode of action of the lonely personal Self as exactly as the limitations of conceptual thought permit. The Self is the man's final court of appeal. 'In itself,' as Hegel would say, it is not to be grasped ; we cannot even assert that it exists in any sense comprehensible from the point of view of earth. But we can assert this and it is comprehensible : *Man is ultimately that for which he has decided within himself.* We said above : the personal Self is both self-begotten and self-borne ; the personality is the child of its own acts ; this is also the real core of the idea of Karma as of all other doctrines of reincarnation. The decision by which the Self gives birth to itself signifies in the first place an attitude of standing still in the unceasing flux of Becoming, an attitude which acts like the formation of a centre of gravity in a cosmic nebula, from which a whole solar system will develop. From this moment all the elements of the soul group themselves more and more round this nucleus. But the process is never completed unless perhaps at the end of life. So what is finally decisive is the *ultimate* significance which is revealed only at the end ; that is why a death-bed conversion may give a new significance to all which has taken place before. But in the meantime the course of all evolution is from one personal decision to another, from one personal responsibility to another. Hence the condemnation by all higher religion of the man who doubts, whose faith is lukewarm : the man who cannot make up his mind on behalf of what is highest in himself is trifling with his own salvation. Hence in all religions



the idea of man's ultimate responsibility : it is only as ultimately responsible that man exists in a metaphysical sense. That is why all the higher religions demand faith : only that inward affirmation which is called faith creates the decision which 'makes real' the Self in phenomenal existence.

We have thus gained a more plastic and more highly-coloured conception of the realization of the Self than we have hitherto possessed. In all decisive epochs man's destinies have been governed by those who were believers. That this does not depend on the content of the faith is shown not only by the number of those who have had the same influence, but above all by the fact that the great majority of the believers who have made history were monomaniacs and often literally madmen. It was the strength and depth of their faith as such which gave them their power over men. The reason of this is as follows. It is by faith and by faith alone that the personality becomes identical with what it represents, and so the latter becomes the means of expression for its whole being.<sup>1</sup> In virtue of the act of faith, being, and representation, subject and object become one. Thus all conceivable rays which emanate from the Self are gathered into one focus. And if the belief is concerned just with this very Self, then, but only then, does all the magic force of this Self become capable of manifesting itself. This explains the fact that absolutely everyone who has faith in himself, even if he were the greatest charlatan in the world or the most absolute rascal, easily finds disciples. The man who in his innermost heart is doubtful of himself will never get a single one. In belief it matters relatively little whether what is believed is correct, or even whether the believer is subjectively certain of the correctness of what he represents ; what does matter always primarily is that he believes *in himself*. Hence the uncanny force of suggestion proved over and over again by hallucinations ;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the chapter 'The Problem of Belief' in my book *Immortality* (London, 1938. Oxford University Press).

what acts is always the suggestive force of faith in themselves on the part of the madmen who represent them. When I was staying in Northern India a poor woman asserted, as often happens there, that she had given birth to an Avatar (a god). The whole of the little town believed her at once, and the reasoning of all the women—it was women as usual who were spreading this belief—was very simple : *I* have never claimed to have given birth to a god ; why, then, should Lakschmi say she has unless it was true. The inward readiness which makes the reception of such a belief possible arises from the intense yearning for salvation which all men have and from their deep craving for miracle. Let a man have faith in himself and possess a strong power of suggestion and anything may happen. In this case even lack of genuine belief, even downright lying are not an absolute hindrance to magical action : they are only an obstacle to action to a good end.

If truth in the scientific sense matters so little, it is finally clear that in the power of personality it is a question only of what we called above magic force. What is absolutely decisive is irrational spiritual being as substance, and the irrational cleaving to this being which we call faith. And so the road traversed by spiritual personality in its becoming can hardly be comprehended at all within the framework of rational norms. This road is continual acceptance of risks, unceasing calling forth of the unforeseen, ever-renewed surprise, and surprise not only for others but for the personality itself. The road which leads spiritual personality to its completion runs not only, as shown above, from act to act, from work to work, by means of which the creator creates himself by fixing ever new points of departure : it runs from decision to decision, and clear foresight is useful only in so far as it is not burdened with retrospection. For every glance cast backward is contrary to the nature of the creative radiation ; at lowest it has a retarding influence, and any slowing down of progress may, as on a bicycle, threaten

the safety of the bicyclist. As for the mirror in which some men are for ever looking at themselves, it reflects, that is to say throws back, all the rays it receives, which make them lose all their power. That is the only sense in which we are justified in condemning vanity, a quality to which, otherwise, we owe most of the amenities of this life : the man or woman who is not anxious to please anyone is seldom agreeable. Realization of Self takes place, I repeat again, by radiation alone ; the more the Self lavishes its rays, the richer it shows itself to be. Here it is the exact opposite of physical truth which holds good : expenditure increases capital.

From this point of view much that was previously obscure becomes clear. The personal Self's mode of action is, at the beginning of its evolution, analogous to that of the invisible scheme which governs the building-up of the physical organism from the ovum to its final form. The Self is a functional centre. It may be called the 'directive element.' Later on it becomes concrete, always outside the sphere of the Ego, then it externalizes itself, either simultaneously or alternatively, under two forms which do not coincide in significance, but are both in conformity with its significance : the form of the exemplar and that of the leader. The exemplar as such does not direct at all : if it has any influence whatsoever, its truth appears self-evident from the first. An exemplar can neither be followed nor imitated, nor can one give oneself to it. Belonging to a deeper stratum than any empirical phenomenon, it involuntarily lays hold from within : either the image born of Spirit incarnates itself in what is earth-born, or else what is of earthly origin feels itself drawn upwards to the heights of the spiritual. It is the Hellenic concept of *enthusiasm* understood in its original sense, of absorption into God, which best renders the supreme expression of this union. In the same sense the orthodox Greek Church understood, and still rightly understands, the real significance which Christ possesses for every man : He cannot be imitated, we neither can

nor should follow His example, but Christ is for every man the incarnate symbol of *His own* supreme end. In the same way exactly parents, who are what they ought to be, are not guides for their children, but exemplars which act unconsciously through the children's own Spirit. Every great Spirit, in short, who continues to live in history, is an exemplar in the same sense. That it is just his 'image' as a symbolic figure and not his actual existence which matters, is proved by the fact that very great men, almost without exception, have not continued to live creatively, as they were in actual fact, but in the shape of myths, which seldom coincide with the results of scientific research; or more accurately they live as the subject of numerous and often contradictory myths. This is because the myth is the prototype image of spiritual reality. So I could write in the essay in my *Figures Symboliques*, which I dedicated to Kant 'the discoverer of eternal significance,' 'it is more in conformity with the significance to correct the facts by the myth than vice versa.' The first expression of Spirit is everywhere the image. Thus the ikon exercises a stronger spiritual influence over the majority of men than the Saint himself in flesh and blood does: only a man here and there recognizes him as a saint when they are face to face with him.

Then is the actual reality of a great personality of no significance? Certainly it may have a supreme importance—not, however, as exemplar but as leader.<sup>1</sup> The latter's mode of action is not silent, secret, involuntary, but charged with energy: he constrains men, he carries them away, his action may be tested by external experience. Its whole way leads through resolutions, acts, decisions, responsibilities. But even in the case of the leader himself the deepest Spirit acts in a mode which remains a mystery to reason. For in this case it is from

<sup>1</sup> We must remember that in all that follows that leader is an exact translation of the German 'führer,' 'the man who leads'; the 'duce,' which is the primary meaning of 'duke.'

the decision as such and not from the result of it that the magical force emanates. On the day when the Buddha received his illumination, this event, the legends relate, was accompanied by catastrophes in the realm of nature of demons and even of the gods : similar catastrophes took place, tradition tells us, when Jesus died upon the Cross. These myths are the expression of the following facts : the decisions which emanate from the depths of a personality endowed with great magical force cast their rays over all those who are in harmony with this force and start corresponding metamorphoses in them. What is true of the religious leader is equally so of the political one. If the leader of a collectivity is really its leader by fate and by vocation, it is also really he who takes decisions for it in conformity with the nature of this collectivity. Everything that such a leader does has the virtue of a symbolic gesture : in having a rebel executed, he carries out a corresponding execution in the soul of those who come within the sphere of his influence ; his creativity awakens in all who follow him all the creative forces they bear within them ; his decision for such and such a road makes it the road of the nation. This accounts for the suddenness with which kingdoms, world-religions, forms of life completely untried and of universal scope are formed, a suddenness which reason comprehends with such difficulty. It is a fact that these new kingdoms, these new religions, these original forms of life are on each occasion formed in an incredibly short space of time, by the collaboration of new men whom no one knew overnight, and who suddenly appeared as if long prepared for their novel task.

Viewed from the standpoint of the personal life, the tragedy of every man who acts as exemplar lies in this : it is not his actual being, but his myth which exercises the formidable influence we have described. This is the reason why very few men take any interest in the struggles and sufferings of the living man as he actually is. The tragedy of the leader, and especially of the political

leader, lies in this, that he is obliged, in order to accomplish his mission, consciously to give up his personal life. As the leader of a multitude, the guide of peoples, however richly developed he may be, he can obviously only live as the directing element, I should say, as the 'leading element,' and this latter is only a minor and often impersonal fragment of himself. Hence the symbolic character of everything that a leader as such does and must do, the official quality and the ceremonial of all his appearances. Only a small part of this public life can have any personal significance for him: conversely an immense amount of what he must do may be repugnant to him personally. The upshot of these considerations is once again—this time exhibited before us as a grandiose symbol—the ultimate loneliness of Spirit. Even the man who is most closely bound up with the community—even he, in the last resort is lonely, he is the more lonely just because he is never alone. Nay, more: he is the most lonely of all men alive.

SUFFERING

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IT IS INADMISSIBLE TO TAKE ANY MAN SERIOUSLY AS A spiritual being, who, having reached maturity and attained the modern degree of awakened consciousness, refuses to recognize that this life is, in origin and essence, painful. The young are most of the time possessed by overmastering instincts and impulses which overpower them for the moment ; these impulses fill their consciousness entirely and succeed and forget each other as soon as realized ; they are incapable consequently of attaining an experience which would allow them to compare and judge. Between thirty and forty, when the transition takes place from a life of acceptance of benefits willingly conferred to one which is a perpetual giving, heavy with responsibilities, this process of transformation with its positive attainable ends may monopolize the attention so entirely that the commonplace 'difficulties exist to be overcome,' becomes the complete expression of genuine experience. From forty onwards, only the shallow man, or the coward, or the liar, can help admitting to himself that by far the greater part of this life is made up of suffering. The man who shirks the imperative necessity for making this admission, can plead no excuse ; even the spirit of our age concentrated as it is on action cannot release him from the obligation : as soon as a man makes the very slightest claim to be taken seriously as a personality *he no longer has the right* to adapt himself inwardly to any outward combination of circumstances whatsoever ;

for him the imperative of truthfulness is a categorical imperative. / For the man who is really truthful there exists absolutely no 'spirit of the age' which can influence his conception of the world, much less determine it. Such as life and the world appear in the actual experience man has of them, *such they are in reality*, no matter how important may be the part of them distorted or obscured by the reigning religions, philosophies, and programmes. /

The fact that the Buddha, the first fully awakened man who had the courage to be entirely truthful with himself, is not considered, in virtue of this indisputable fact alone and independently of any religious formulary of belief, as one of the greatest among the great exemplars of mankind, is a proof of how rare men are who deserve to be taken seriously as moral personalities. When intelligent consciousness awakened for the first time to perceive almost at once how appalling is the reality in which fate has placed man by no wish of his own, the soul's creative power, quite naturally, occupied itself at first in contriving procedures and expedients by which, making use of deceptive mechanisms and the art of illusion, he might more or less restore the bearableness of his first blind life on the basis of an open-eyed existence. / And as to-day most men still have not the strength to endure reality as it is, they still live a life which for the most part rests on fictions even if it is not altogether regulated by such fictions. / But from century to century those who have thus artificially blinded themselves are of less and less importance—to say nothing of those who have inherited a bygone blindness which they are carrying on. From century to century the human race becomes more and more wide-awake ; more and more it is these completely awakened men who are setting the tone of history. Since the organ we call the intellect has reached its full development, it appears with increasing clearness from decade to decade and at critical times even from year to year, that openness to the world and truthfulness alone are preparing the way of salvation. More and more exclusively it is



*inward* decisions alone which count. More and more speedily decisions brought about by external pressure alone are seen being cancelled—think only of the resurrection of Germany after the Treaty of Versailles—the life of falsehoods grows shorter and shorter, a deliberate falsification of the facts can less and less maintain itself as a truth of belief; to-day already conversion by constraint is no longer a factor to be relied upon in history. It is the same with the specific weight a right attitude carries as opposed to a wrong one. Breadth of view proves itself more and more efficacious, catholicity of feeling more and more active and capable of winning men's hearts, narrow-mindedness more and more deadly. There was a time when illusions did not have to be paid for too dearly, one illusion destroyed only made way for a fresh one, and the question of stark naked truth never arose or hardly so: to-day truth thrusts itself upon us as inevitable consequences every time man persists in ignoring it too long. Thus we must look upon the horrors of the Great War and the World-Revolution as the punishment which the depths of human nature have sent in answer to the aberrations of some nations which thought they could order life by the fictions which pretend that man is naturally good and capable of unlimited progress. To-day then, made wise by bitter experience, we can assert as evident beyond contradiction: that the way of falsehood either towards oneself or others, in whatever sense it is taken, is no longer for man a way of salvation. The synthesis of truth and truthfulness, henceforward determinant, forbids us to distinguish any longer even between means and ends. Everything shows that it is impossible—we have said this already in another context—to make this distinction on the plane of the spiritual life: at most—as Berdiaëv said one day—we can assign primacy to the means, since the choice of them is an infallible index what kind of man employs them, while the ends are seldom attained closely enough for us to be able to reason from them

to his deepest intention. But when once the synthesis of truth and truthfulness has become determinant, this impossibility of distinguishing between means and ends applies equally on the empirical plane.

What we are stating here sums up the views we arrived at previously concerning the necessity for openness to the world and for truthfulness, but this time the accent of importance is laid in the particular place which gives the doctrine of the Buddha its particular groundtone. And this no doubt is possible. Lived experience in the human sense presupposes as a condition *sine qua non* a state of wakefulness; lived experience of truth a degree of wakefulness which allows of clear discrimination; integral experience of the world is possible only in that state of complete wakefulness which the Buddha sets before man as the goal of his aspiration after salvation. If, then, we start from the idea of awakenedness we can gather together in the following proposition the views which belong to the same logical trains of thought in the preceding chapters: since Spirit has made its break-in into human nature, and more exclusively in proportion as it incarnates itself in it more deeply and more completely, there remains only *a single road* by which to find salvation: the road which leads to a total awakening and is accepted with complete consent. Only complete awakening, and not a relapse into blindness, can deliver the captive human being from his suffering, for only total awakening creates the equilibrium between Self and the World which is in conformity with human nature at its deepest. In principle, however, this has been so from the first moment when Spirit made its break-in. That is why not only has the ideal of truthfulness been, from the earliest dawn of spiritual consciousness represented under the objectified form of a cardinal virtue—but its ideal quality was evident from the very first whether it was understood or not. From the purely empirical point of view, it is not easy to see why truthfulness should be preferable to falsehood towards ourselves

and towards others. Most truths are anything but palatable ; the whole emotional order, and the whole domain of Delicadeza can neither be reduced nor elevated to the level of the ideal of truth. It is none the less true that every man who is conscious of himself, even in the most confused fashion, is driven by his deepest lone being to pass beyond any fixation on the empirical plane which can be overcome. Such a man feels : I *ought* to see life as it really is, for in my deepest Self I wish to see it so. I *ought* to find a fresh inner equilibrium in a spirit of truthfulness, for in order to realize my Self I am bound to do so. But man, even the deepest, is not ripe from the first to achieve this inward order : only a metamorphosis creates in him this new state at once demanded and desired. But this process of transformation is painful. In this lies the profound significance of suffering.

What kind of man the Buddha was has seldom been understood, at any rate in the West, because the majority of men are unconsciously inclined to understand any doctrine of suffering and of pity in the spirit of some sentimental demand. Now the Buddha was plainly free from all sentimentality. (Indeed, when he taught that life is suffering and that it was possible to do away with this suffering, he had not in view any sort of well-being in the earthly sense : he had in mind exclusively a total awakening and the path by which it might be reached. But like the great exoteric he was, he used as the practical motive power of his sublime doctrine of completion the desire which in reality all men cherish : the desire to see suffering cease. The traditional Hindu doctrine of Karma enabled man to make the inevitable necessity under which he finds himself of accepting the suffering laid upon him appear endurable. We others, modern men of the West, can do without this moral anæsthetic. We are strong enough to-day to look this pitiful and sinister reality in the face as it actually is, and not to have to invent compensations where clear

knowledge does not afford us any reason to hope for them.

Judged from the point of Spirit, physical pain is evidently devoid of all meaning, and so an evil—pure and simple. Its original biological significance is that of an alarm signal. But the suffering it causes us to endure is altogether out of proportion to the minimum of pain which would be enough to give the alarm : anæsthesia and narcosis are then the only sensible means of correcting a natural function which is plainly imperfect. There are few assertions so absurd as to pretend that nature is always wise and always right. It may pass perhaps for plants and animals : for man—we have explained this in *Problems of Personal Life* in dealing with the moral problem—she only undertakes to do part of what is necessary to ensure a bearable equilibrium : here intelligence must continue and complete the task which nature has only begun. Now what is true of the body is equally true of the soul and the Spirit : here, too, pain ‘in itself’ is quite devoid of meaning. Whoever fixes his attention on the crude fact of pain, as numerous writers did who at the beginning of this century thought they gave proof of profundity by professing to suffer from life, is superficial in the worst sense. For on the plane of facts as originally given there are no spiritual problems. Even in the domain of soul all problems were originally lacking : problems arise always and solely from the fact that Spirit in its freedom bestows a ‘meaning’ upon what in itself is meaningless. This is so in the highest degree, in the case of all interpretation of suffering such as Karma, trial, purification, or expiation. Certainly suffering *may* be conceived in each of these ways and then it acts in accordance with the spirit of its interpretation, but here it is the *conception* which creates the corresponding state of facts, even where it appears to conform to it : it is never in conformity with significance except in relation to suffering man as determined by Spirit, and in this case it is the significance which creates

of itself the facts which correspond to it and would not exist without it. But the greater part of all interpretation, far from proving that man is determined by Spirit, proves, on the contrary, his weakness. For man as an intellectual being, the possibility of giving logical reasons for everything is properly a vital necessity : thus he endures the inexplicable with difficulty for reasons of the same kind as those for which, as a being of flesh and blood, he has difficulty in enduring physical pain. That is why he is so easily satisfied with the first explanation that comes to hand, provided it explains everything and explains it quickly without circumlocutions, without his having to make any effort to reflect, and provided he thus gets rid of a feeling of uneasiness. Hence the impossibility of exterminating superstition : the deepest significance of superstition, we have already said, lies in the fact that it postulates connected trains of cause and effect, even when there are none, and of just those causal relations which at first sight appear plausible to a primitive intelligence. In the case of suffering then it is, I repeat, a question of the free bestowal of significance upon something which in itself has none. Free bestowal of significance even where the interpretation is correct, for suffering as such, ' simply what does harm,' is absolutely devoid of meaning, it exists only in virtue of being a natural fact. This is why from the standpoint of soul too, which is not the same as that of Spirit, the fact of dwelling on suffering as such is, just as in the physical domain, the sign of a shallow man. The only attitude worthy of a man of any depth, is that which admits that what has no significance really has not any, the attitude which can bear to face this truth that everything has not been created with a view to man's predilections, and there exist many things on earth which are devoid of all significance.

Consequently, most of the high-sounding terms which from time immemorial have been consecrated to sorrow and suffering are hollow. Nearly all the pathos of them

rests on this far from pathetic fact, that they allow the man who hears or reads them to make his own confused suffering unreal by externalizing it in the clear representation of someone else's suffering. This suffering of another gives pleasure because it is not your own, so that a pinch of 'Schadenfreude'<sup>1</sup> gives an agreeable spice to the pleasure, already considerable, of being carried away by emotion. Here the spirit of manly heroism, which holds it blameworthy to linger, however little, on suffering, is perfectly right ; it is mistaken, however, in considering this virtue as specifically manly : as a general rule women endure suffering with much greater fortitude than men do, though they weep more easily. In spite of that it is true that suffering *may* be, as Meister Eckhart has said, the horse which of all others brings his rider most speedily to the goal. It is in this sense, and in this sense alone—we are going to determine it exactly very soon—that every man who desires to lead a deep personal life is bound to pass through suffering. This is the 'great mystery' of the Cross.

**T**HIS BOOK MUST SO FAR AS POSSIBLE ABSTRACT FROM everything but what might be useful for each man's personal life. But the problem of suffering obliges me to consider a few facts which have to do with the psychology of religions. When once the basis of possible comprehension existent to-day is attained objectively—I say objectively, because the vanguard of mankind has objectified its correcter and profounder view of life in expressions which are generally comprehensible—man has no longer any right to decide about religious truth by relying on data furnished by historical criticism or

<sup>1</sup> This word, base enough, which, though we have no equivalent, corresponds none the less to very general human reality, means 'the pleasure one feels at the misfortune of another.'

interpretation of texts. Not but what these latter are not, or may not be, right on their own plane : the fact that they are right is not of the slightest importance. Every religious symbol, which gives proof of force, which arouses faith and gains credence, whether it be a living person, an ikon, a dogma, or a doctrine, is primarily the symbol of a *truth* foreshadowed by the believer. It is impossible that anything unreal should act in this way : no one has ever been deeply impressed by a spiritual purport unless there existed a correspondence between the representation of it and his own deepest spiritual being. This reflexion alone is sufficient finally to exclude every question of dogma from the plane of scientific truth. Questions of this order have been stated on this plane too long : their truth belongs to another dimension ; it has to do with the inner relation which exists between transcendent reality and that deepest Self which can never become an object nor leave the sphere which is its own. Nor is the value of the expression in which this relation is clothed ever an independent value : it depends on the degree of realization which the relation it introduces attains through its means, and so entirely on the inward preparedness of souls and spirits to realize this relation, and this preparedness is conditioned by space and time.

Hence we may without exaggeration, apropos of criticism and textual interpretation, maintain this : they show, above all, the fantastic independence of religious significance so far as scientific truth is concerned. Even the least objective history of dogma cannot obscure the two following facts : first a piety indubitably Christian has borne witness to interpretations of the same original words so different that there could be no question of reconciling them on any scientific plane : second, that living Christianity has believed, and to-day still believes in truths which not only Saint Paul but Jesus Himself never taught. In this connection Albert Schweitzer's *Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, a scientific work of the first

rank, is particularly instructive : the statements Schweitzer makes show us the founders of Christianity as extraordinarily fettered by ideas which appear to us pre-Christian in their essence, and to which consequently no living Christian any longer adheres. I purposely employ the expression 'piety indubitably Christian,' 'living Christian,' 'living Christianity'; the essential truth which must never be lost sight of is just this : it is not representations and interpretations which constitute religious truth, it consists of something much deeper ; representations and interpretations are one and all, without exception, conditioned by the spirit of the age. For this reason the first doctrine recognized is not necessarily the truest : the truest is that most in conformity with the significance. Now conformity to significance, in matters of religious truth, does not depend on any dogmas as such, but on the accuracy with which it expresses the sincerely lived relation between the deepest Self and transcendent reality. If we wish, at any cost, to lay down a necessary relation between doctrine and religious significance, then, without the slightest doubt, of all traditional doctrines, the Catholic one is the truest. According to it the supreme authority is represented by the Church which grows and is transformed along with its whole corpus of traditions. But the ultimate truth is wider still. Not only all interpretations of the Gospel, but *absolutely all* manifestations of the Christian spirit and soul belong inseparably, like branch, leaves, and flowers to the common tree from which they have proceeded—just as all spiritual life of the Hindus, in a religious as well as a profane sense, belongs to Hinduism. The peculiar and unique mentality of the European Middle Ages for centuries allowed this truth to be expressed in the shape of the claim which the *one* Christian church put forward to totality. But the perpetual schisms of later times, and the increasing ramification which they produced, the Church's loss of importance in general, the autonomy conquered by science and philosophy, the



inward detachment by which everything not directly belonging to worship or to spiritual life was dissociated from the Church, all this in no way proves that the Christian era had come to an end. It only proves that, with its codified theology and its claims to power, the Church, that most singular creation, born of the reception of an Oriental religiosity by the legalist spirit of Rome, and by Germanic institutionalism, does not and cannot any longer embody the totality of Christian life. The living spirit of Jesus was assuredly the first founder of the Christian world, but not the only founder. True Christianity as a phenomenon is the living synthesis of all that finally goes back to, or has later been traced to, the impulse given by Christ. But as being, as essence, this Christianity is indissolubly related to a certain depth and at the same time to a certain form of metaphysical experience, which, in the process of the break-in of Spirit, corresponds to that particular phase of which, for our cultural sphere, Jesus Christ is the symbol.

This experience, as expression of a definite subjective state corresponding to a definite cosmic phase, is shared in some degree by absolutely *every man* who belongs inwardly to the Christian cosmos—this Christian cosmos being understood as defining the domain in which a break-in of Spirit of a definite quality has taken place. What counts here is not what the man believes, still less what he holds as true, but what he is. If formerly the situation was perhaps really different on this point, this was connected with another subjective state of the concrete man. This state, due to particular circumstances, makes way henceforward for a new state which itself allows a new and deeper comprehension of the original truth. But it is from this 'every man' who lives in the Christian symbols his own deepest truth, that they all have, from the very beginning, drawn their vital force. The man who did not believe in Christ, that is to say did not recognize himself in Him, whom Christ did not enlighten with a revelation, for that man Christ meant

nothing. And at bottom the original idea according to which such a man was shut out of Christ's kingdom, had precisely this meaning. To-day still the age as a whole is undoubtedly not ripe—especially during the non-religious and antimetaphysical phase in which I am writing these lines—to understand what I mean here. Still what follows should appeal to the hearts of most natures which are genuinely religious and at the same time capable of understanding. Certainly from the time of Paul onwards the doctrine of 'Christ within us,' however misunderstood or travestied, has constituted the kernel of all Christology ; in Paul himself this is proved by the fact that he gave his own inward revelation precedence over the tradition of Jesus. Now this doctrine not only lives independently of the historic fact of the appearing of Jesus, but also it in no way derogates from the importance of this latter. The cosmic significance of the impulse which came into the world with Christ and with belief in Him, lies in the fact that it set going a decisive advance in the process of the break-in of Spirit, an advance which in that discontinuous fashion proceeding by fits and starts which characterizes the progress of all changes in this world, has led to further advances which, however, can all be traced back to this one, and are all descendants of it, and then to more and more remote advances. On the one hand this progress is manifested in a deeper comprehension of the original doctrine : on the other by hitherto unknown phenomena. *All* men in agreement with the historical moment and in proportion to their individual capacity for receiving it, had and have a share in this process of advance. But, as always happens, here again it was *one* man who anticipated both in time and in the sense of intensity and totality, the general evolution and who thus became a mouth-piece of all, and an exemplar for all. He became so objectively as a being, quite independently of his personal opinions which were predetermined, as in all men, by his personal past. Let us think here of what we set out in length in *Solitude* : great spiritual monads

are not only forces without possible rivals, they exist so objectively as what they are that their action appears independent of any representations attached to it. Hence the increasing clearness with which the image of these very great men is disengaged is in exact proportion to the time which has elapsed since their death : more and more all spatial and temporal accidents are cleared away from their image, more and more and with an increasing purity what in them is original and unique is separated from the residuum. Whether Jesus was or was not such as He is believed to be, matters not ; what matters is that He represented the 'Christ within,' this Christ within who more and more asserts Himself as a world-power. More than ever, at the moment when I write these lines (1935) it is of the first importance to proclaim this truth. The traditional Churches certainly are declining in influence, and it is quite possible that even the particular religious relation which unites man to a saviour god may lose its importance. But objectively the world becomes more and more Christian, which is enough to prove that the deep significance of Christ's manifestation lies in the fact that He inaugurated a new phase in the general process of the break-in of Spirit. Countless Hindus, Chinese, and Japanese to-day understand the truths of Christianity better than professed Christians do. All the primary ethical and spiritual data of the whole world of mankind are of a Christian order ; all have their foundation in the recognition of the real spiritual unity of mankind, a unity to which the individual belongs in a stratum of his nature lying deeper than that in which he belongs to any empirical community. Now it is with Jesus that the consciousness of this unity has arisen for the first time as an historic force. From that moment begins the objective reign—I say objective because the Unconscious in all men determined by the Spirit can no longer help recognizing it—of the spirit of openness to the world, of an emotional and ethical quality wider than that which formed the starting-point of all philosophy

and all religion before Jesus. For spirit, from that moment, the empirical barriers which separated men from each other ceased to exist. Hence the unanimous indignation of the conscience of the world at any attempt to re-establish a pre-Christian state of soul—whether those who are thus indignant have or have not any moral or practical right to indignation in the given case. Hence the inevitable hopelessness of every reaction against the victories of Christianity. The only one of these reactions which deserves to be seriously considered, the Bolshevik reaction, is itself a kind of Christianity turned upside down which has been transmogrified into Satanism. But in addition to this the advance of technical skill, of science, and of exact knowledge, all these, too, belong to the field of forces of the Christian impulse, even when they seem to deflect mankind from it. It is not without cause that all these forms of progress without exception have been realized within the sphere of Christian civilization: knowledge and exact comprehension, unlike prejudices, superstitions, and distorting interpretations, are the normal results of greater openness to the world which allows man to have truthful experience of this life-text which a consciousness walled up within itself can only attain by means of much pondering, arbitrary decrees, and fantastic interpretations.

It is therefore not true that a change in the manner of conceiving Christianity is equivalent to dechristianization. On the contrary a deeper comprehension of it, within the scheme of a religious and metaphysical experience which has remained the same, would mean an absolute advance. It is precisely in this order of comprehension that we are to-day more capable than ever before of understanding the profound significance of the Cross: the aim of our reflexions on the psychology of religions given above, was only to prepare the reader for this deeper comprehension. The symbol of the Cross cannot be grasped in its full significance if it is separated from that of the Eagle, whose triumphant sign was flaming in

the highest heaven when the ascension of the symbol of the Cross was only just beginning. Man face to face with reality may take up two creative attitudes : the one consists in seizing or possessing, the other in being-possessed or more shortly in possessedness. The former leads to mastery of oneself and of the world. All forms that can be assumed by the activity and mentality of the man of action presuppose this attitude ; the hero is the highest expression of it. But if the hero is the only man to transform the Not-Self, in the widest sense of the word, directly, if he alone can stamp upon it the imprint of his being, he has, to balance matters, little or no inner experience, and he himself does not change. For this reason the traditional symbol of him is bronze or granite. Steadfastness is his last inward resort. This kind of being, the symbol and prototype of which for the West is that of the hero of antiquity, found its highest national expression in the Roman world : with an exclusiveness never attained before or after her, Rome lived under the sign of the Eagle.

The Eagle was at the highest point of its course, the world saw and interpreted everything under this sign when for the first time in history the symbol of the Cross kindled upon the horizon, do I say kindled, cast upon men's souls a light so bright, so violent, that, a few centuries later by an inward conquest, it had subjugated the whole of the vast empire of the Eagle. The significance of this event is explained by the words of Christ : ' What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ' The pure Eagle-Man does not think about his soul at all ; his life unfolds on a strictly objective plane. Action, achievement, struggle, victory or defeat, death and the continuation of his life and activity in that long memory which we call glory, give a meaning to the whole of his life : his lived experience and what becomes of himself, do not interest him. Not that he is necessarily impersonal or devoid of spirituality, but the whole of his life is exhausted in radiating and expending himself. In

this respect the sacrifice of his life which the pure Eagle-Man is ready to make at any moment, *signifies* even more than it is : quite shortly it signifies the sacrifice of the inner life itself. At this point we see quite clearly why the man who is Eagle and nothing more, judged from the standpoint of Spirit, stands for the principle of *Evil*. In the chapter of *The Recovery of Truth* entitled 'The ethical problem,' and also in the chapter 'Moralism' of *America Set Free*, I have explained that evil is a necessary element in the process of life, on the one hand as the destructive component of life which is always at every moment both construction and destruction, and then in order to create limits : I need not therefore go back to this point. In the *Meditations* I have explicitly shown why Nature, as such, must necessarily appear 'evil' to Spirit. This state of things has its *raison d'être* in the difference and the incompatibility which exist between the norms of Nature and those of Spirit. As soon as man judges exclusively from the standpoint of Spirit, desires to refer everything to Spirit or bring everything within the sphere of it, he is bound to judge negatively a great part of what is natural. But, conversely, every time he lives his nature and its necessities to the full, he cannot help putting up with and accepting things which his Spirit condemns as evil. This tragic tension, from which results the fundamentally insoluble character of the ethical problem, is for every man who is spiritually conscious the deepest primordial datum, which he must recognize and which must form his starting-point. In the same way if he is truthful and not a coward he cannot help consenting to what is uncurably evil in so far as it not only properly belongs to him, but is actually indispensable to his life. And it is precisely as an *evil* irremediably belonging to him that he must recognize it ; he must not, to preserve his traditional equilibrium, attempt a transvaluation of all values. He must bring evil, as evil, into the process of integration which will give birth to his ultimate integral being. The old idea of sin, which presupposes a fall, made much too

clean-cut a distinction between man and the evil he bears within him. At bottom, the inventor of this idea was the forerunner of Rousseau : he was already holding that man is by nature good. That he is *not* good by nature no epoch has proved in so startling a fashion as our own : its atrocities *after* man has been educated for more than twenty centuries by the doctrines of salvation derived from the East of old, from the antique world, from Christianity and finally from the century of Enlightenment, have a demonstrative power much greater than that of all the horrors of past times. So, from the standpoint of historical significance, with all due deference to Machiavelli and Hobbes, men have certainly not been wrong in considering the author of the famous 'transvaluation of all values,' Frederick Nietzsche, as the spiritual father of these atrocities. For this 'transvaluation' judged by its psychological action—and this alone counts in history—amounted in the last analysis to claiming that evil is not evil at all, and so to a turning of all problems upside down : what used to be at the bottom was henceforward at the top. At first Nietzsche corrupted only a few so-called intellectuals here and there. But when his ideas became more widely diffused, more and more numerous masses continued the 'transvaluation of all values' in an ever more elementary, primitive, and violent fashion. In Russia this went on, and is still going on, most plainly in the sphere of action, in Germany in that of interpretation. For all this upsetting of problems only one reason can be brought forward, but that one is very important : *till to-day Western tradition—notably unlike Hindu tradition—has in reality presented a lacuna, a most important doctrine is missing, viz. : the one which teaches that all creation is and at the same time signifies destruction.* This is why it is inadmissible to perceive only the negative aspect of destruction. It is impossible to consent to life without at the same time consenting to death. It is impossible to make progress without damage to the life of others. It is impossible

to live without executing and burying someone from moment to moment. And the more creative a life is the more clearly does its counterpart or destructive component stand out. All creative spirits without exception had and have strong destructive instincts directed even and chiefly against themselves. For in proportion as they themselves become different and grow greater, in proportion as they are transformed and aspire to be born anew, they cannot help seeking to destroy their given state. Thus Jesus commanded to slay the self. Thus every spirit which rushes forward is always getting himself afresh into difficulties by what may be called 'faulty acts,' and so does away with the possibilities previously offered to him, for at bottom he really does not wish to take advantage of these opportunities, but to be transformed into a new man. Let us think once more of the earliest history of life : it was never the creatures which obtained the greatest success at a given moment who have won the day in the long run, for their success always depended on an adaptation to definite circumstances, on a specialization ; if these particular circumstances happened to change, a readaptation proved impossible for these creatures, for a specialization can never be put back again, and always means loss of elasticity. If it was only for this general biological reason, Dean Inge (the author of the best book on Plotinus up till now), is perfectly right when he transforms the current English saying ' nothing succeeds like success ' into its opposite, ' nothing fails like success.' This is why every man whose highest aim is to become a new man and grow greater, *must* try to get rid of the fixations due to his successes. It is for exactly the same reason that all genuine statesmen love war, whatever they may pretend, for what they desire in reality is to alter the given historic picture, and they can succeed in so doing only after a preliminary destruction. So artists, for love of their art, forsake one woman after another, one friend after another, one country after another, without any remorse, for only to their work, the



child of their spirit, do their hearts really cling. At the crisis of history at which we now are, very few men even desire sincerely at the bottom of their hearts the 'happy ending' which the suggestion of America makes them assert in words to be the only possible goal. In any case the majority of Germans are dominated by a direct desire for death.<sup>1</sup> Now the man who consents to his own death always in his innermost depths admits the death of others.

This curious contempt of the modern man for his own life and that of others, does not signify only, as most men who have noticed the problem pretend, a psychological reaction against a period characterized by a sham optimism, a sham humanity, which does not correspond to man's real instincts ; it is *also* a reaction against an obvious misunderstanding of reality as it is, for which the whole Christian era is responsible, a reaction on the morrow of the evident failure of an era which has not fulfilled the promise of its early days. This misunderstanding only became fully conscious of itself from the day when moral optimism had stemmed the tide of psychological pessimism which characterized primitive as well as fully developed Christianity. This is why this reaction could only present itself now. It has only been the more terrible on that account. And as happens always throughout nature the 'too little' is at once counterbalanced by a 'too much.' From it results a direct relapse into paganism in its harshest and cruellest form. The death of others, one's own death, suddenly man experienced them as they were experienced by the peoples of Mediterranean and Nordic antiquity in their darkest and most desperate states of mind : as a pitiless fate which waits for each one of us, and on that account gives each of us the right to be pitiless too. Mediterranean paganism, however, has never been as gloomy as Nordic paganism ; the harmonious temperament of the peoples concerned preserved them and still preserves their

<sup>1</sup> See the long note on the German soul in the chapter 'Truthfulness.'

existent neo-paganism from over-emphasizing the pitiless character of fate. This over-emphasizing takes place all the more among the peoples of cold and rugged regions, to whom the advantage of an original harmony was not granted.

It is true that the Eagle-Man as the incarnation of a spiritual principle, does not necessarily, in the last resort, stand for the principle of evil. But he does really incarnate an intrinsic evil so far as he stands for Original Hunger, covetousness of other men's goods, conquest, usurpation, annexation, murder, destruction, and desire to alter frontiers by force of arms. Cut off from these states of soul, from the attitudes and activities which we have grouped together under the above terms, the eagle-principle is unable to manifest itself on earth at all. This is a question of *natural* necessity. But, however necessary this aspect may be, the eagle-principle is none the less evil. It is just in its incurably evil aspect that its *positive* significance lies : this results from the necessary connexion of every good with a corresponding evil which serves as its limit. Evil only becomes an absolute negative when its link with the corresponding good is destroyed and it becomes the object of an exclusive accentuation, which makes the destructive component become the weight which tilts the scale. But this extreme is only reached when many intermediate grades and states have been passed through. A radical evil, as Kant called it, only shows itself at the moment when an evil of a spiritual nature incarnates itself in the natural evil, when 'the Spirit which denies' and from the first *aims at* evil incarnates itself in the life of a destructive component which on the natural plane wins the day without dispute. The Spirit of Evil has found its ideal incarnation in Satan the fallen angel. The most frequent and most odious representative of Satan is the toad-like envious man, the man to whom every good fortune, every good quality of his neighbour is agony, who is overjoyed at his every misfortune, the man who says 'he does not deserve it' or

‘that is luck for him.’ The criminal is *not* a genuine representative of radical evil, because he is always a broken, a sick man. As for the beast-of-prey man, whom Oswald Spengler, with his extraordinary spiritual blindness defined as being the type of the ordinary man, he is wicked and yet beautiful, like the tiger. This is because beauty, as we have seen in the *Meditations* (Delicadeza) and in the last essay in *The Art of Life*, has earthly roots quite different from those of Truth. On the one hand it signifies the final possible perfection of earthly expression, on the other, however, as primitive Christendom so well understood, a seduction from Spirit, which grows and advances only under the banner of truth. That is why beauty is the outward sign of every kind of perfection, including that of ultimate transfiguration by Spirit, and also on the other hand that of the perfection of evil and in evil. Thus the majority of beasts of prey, always ready to attack, are of striking beauty, especially serpents. Now the pure Eagle-Man is essentially a beast of prey. From the spiritual point of view therefore—no interpretation will ever alter this—the Eagle-Man, however beautiful and sublime he may appear, does not represent the principle of Good but of Evil.

And he proves it himself by the fact that the subjective means nothing to him. For in taking no account of the subject the Eagle-Man is forsaking the only thing which counts spiritually and ultimately. The essentially evil element which he represents finds its clearest outward expression in the fact that the Eagle-Man by taking no account of his Self proper, and because he does not take account of it, is indifferent also to other selves. Hence the appalling cruelty and harshness of the peoples of antiquity, especially the Jews who, in their own peculiar fashion, professed an extreme allegiance to the eagle-principle. In their palmy days everything was ‘objective’ for them; the only thing which mattered to them was the fulfilling of the Law, not personal dispositions either religious or moral. And to the judgment of

posterity they reveal themselves, in all senses except the military and political ones, as the true ancestors of the material supremacy which modern man has achieved in the world. If it is not rooted in a sacral order, every ethos exclusively dominated by the eagle-principle leads to the primacy of evil. America proves this to-day with the force of a symbol. Every man there recognizes in principle, in spite of their smiling friendliness, the right to throw millions of men into distress and death simply for the sake of obtaining a satisfactory financial balance-sheet. A life entirely directed to secular success occasions there an impoverishment of soul such as the world has never yet witnessed to the same extent. The inevitable consequence of Bolshevism is the same : it assassinates men by millions, it persecutes every higher principle—its declared hostility to soul can lead to nothing else. The reader must not be surprised to see me thus relating Judaism, Americanism and Bolshevism to the Eagle : no doubt the eagle-principle finds its prototype in the heroic fighter, in so far as this latter is the incarnation of a spiritual principle, and to this day its supreme expression in the world is the Roman Empire, but it appears also under countless forms of inferior value : destroyers with no object like the Mongol Khans, the adventurer who is for ever risking his life without the smallest benefit to himself or anyone else, the profiteer in war and disturbances, who equally shallow in all ages turns to profit every possible combination of circumstances, and finally the hollow intellectualist who does violence to reality. So too as among animals, the eagle, the king of birds, is not the only one to incarnate the eagle-principle, there are also the vulture and the owl. But even the highest expressions of the eagle-type are, at any rate as to the greater part of them, the offspring of evil. The most pure-hearted soldier is compelled to kill and destroy, no interpretation would change the inherently evil spiritual significance of such activities. Whoever bases his domination upon constraint is forced to do violence to souls, and

this invariably, in some sense or other, renders them worse than they were before, and by reaction makes worse him who exerts the power. Whoever assigns to the objective primacy over the subjective sinks, by so doing, in his intentions and mentality to that 'plane of things' which in *Problems of Personal Life* we defined as sub-human and belonging to the not-Self. Here, then, is a fresh aspect of the tragedy of earthly life : what is necessary, nay more indispensable to the community, what demands from the individual his utmost devotion, the noblest spirit of sacrifice, this too, by its own proper significance, is none the less an evil beyond dispute. Every refusal to take account of the subjective man, or to put it otherwise, of the vehicle of the spiritual principle in man, is an evil. I know that those who have the courage to confess this truth are not many in number at the moment when I write these lines, and fewer still are those who have the strength to endure this tragic tension. But this simply proves how few and far between to-day are the men to whom the ethos of the hero is really suited. All ages which have really known what heroism means have understood it as tragic heroism. A heroism which does not set going a tragic conflict, that is to say an insoluble one, is only a sham heroism.

Twenty centuries ago, at the moment when the Eagle was displaying a more complete power than ever before, the spiritualized soul for the first time gained consciousness of its own absolute value and its right to grow. Certainly in the East this consciousness had already awakened much earlier : none the less I have the right to write 'for the first time' because it is only *in opposition* to the triumphant Eagle that all the significance of the Cross could become manifest. Then man felt this : what matters more than subduing the world is to transform one's Self *to grow in the Spirit*. This needed an orientation which was diametrically opposed to that of the Eagle-Man : an orientation towards the soul, one's own and other men's, towards the subject in oneself and

in others, towards the soul and the subject considered as supreme values, values which the Eagle does not recognize. But the road which leads to the Self does not go—if we may widen the meaning of the word which shows the action of seizing—from possession to possession ; it goes from possessedness to possessedness.

**T**O SHOW THE EXTRAORDINARY RANGE OF THIS LAST concept which takes in a world of ideas infinitely wider than that which had up to that time been associated with the Cross, I will first of all reproduce here what I wrote in the spring of 1932 about Leo Frobenius' *Schicksalkunde* ; I do not see any better means of making perfectly clear what there is to say here than to recall the discoveries of Leo Frobenius about the morphology of civilizations.

‘ According to Frobenius the true history of human civilization does not advance from concept to concept, but from possessedness to possessedness.<sup>1</sup> Concepts by which man becomes master of reality are the final forms of expression of a feeling of life which existed before them ; everything which can be interpreted *a posteriori* as directive idea or sovereign principle manifests itself at first as involuntary and uncomprehended expression. Such and such a side of reality “ lays hold of ” such and such a determinate human species, either in a one directional series such as time, or periodically, or from country to country, and lays hold of it with the irresistible force of a regular obsession. From the specific quality of the possessedness experienced there will result *a posteriori* the particular form of a given civilization. It is thus that men have been possessed by

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible here to render the play upon words which connects *Be-griff* (concept) with *En-griff-enheit* (possessedness) in German. We shall understand it if we remember that the concept claims to ‘ lay hold of ’ a part or zone of reality.

the symbol of the animal, the plant, the sun, the moon, the image of creative nature, or by a spiritual Beyond experienced as a reality. Once possessed, these men became incapable of having the experience of anything whatsoever in the world except from the starting-point of this pre-existent state of obsession. If this obsession, this "possession"—I use the term in the sense in which the Middle Ages said "demoniacal possession"—ceased, straightway every particular form of civilization founded upon it, lost its living roots. In just as clean-cut fashion men found themselves separated by country or by climates expressing different feelings of life: it is well established, for instance, that from the palæolithic era onwards an immovable dividing line between two different apprehensions of life ran along the crest of the Vosges. . . . The last "possession" which Western mankind has known has been "possession" by *facts*. Before the eighteenth century man hardly noticed what we to-day call facts. But from the nineteenth century onwards they were noticed with an exclusiveness which had no precedent except those by which magical relations had benefited in old days. It is this possession by facts alone—a possession of exactly the same kind as any other possession—and not any definitely consolidated spiritual advance which accounts for the extraordinary dynamic power of the technical era. But let this possession come to an end and all the statements of problems which the eighteenth century was the first to promote to primacy will be readjusted.'

The Romans of pagan times, too, were evidently possessed; possessed by the pathos of giving themselves up wholly to the common weal. But as pure eagle-men they were possessed only in the 'objective' sense, and besides, the main end to which their energies were directed was politics, and so the world of Gana, infra-personal and blind. This is why the question of personal possessedness very probably arose for them less than for

any other human race which has played a part in history. It is for this reason that stoicism was the last word of their philosophy. To balance matters the impulse given by Christ called forth a sudden equally exclusive laying of emphasis upon the symbol diametrically opposed to that of the Eagle: namely, the Cross. But here it is no longer only a question of 'possession' by a particular experience—the primary condition not only of every lived experience but also of every action, for no one unless he is passionately interested in an object, consecrates his whole energy to it—but of a deep-seated revolution: *Christ sets up as the highest value surrender as such under the banner of truthfulness.*

In this sentence we lay hold of the very core of Christianity. At the same time we prove finally that the impulse given by Christ represents a decisive advance in the process of the break-in of Spirit, and that it is just in this that the deepest essence of Christianity consists. The Eagle-Man desires only to 'possess' the external world; not merely the question of personal surrender, but even that of truth, never arises for him, except in the particular sense in which truth may be a means to power, and the question of truthfulness never arises at all. That is why statesmen and great military leaders lie to men and deceive them quite unscrupulously the instant they consider falsehood advantageous. But *Spirit* cannot grow except under the flag of truth, and it finds its perfection not in the agreement of idea and being on the projective plane of scientific knowledge, but in the perfect agreement of objective truth and subjective truthfulness. That is why Christ, before anyone else in the West, declared over and over again: 'I am the truth.' Here we have come back again to what we stated at the beginning of this chapter about the significance of suffering and of the Cross: we may link with it the rest of what we have to say. We wrote above:

'Every man who is conscious of himself even in the most indistinct fashion, is driven by his deepest lonely



being to leave behind him every fixation on the empirical plane which can be surmounted. Such a man feels thus : I *ought* to see life as it really is, for in the depth of my heart I wish to see it so. I *ought* to find a fresh inward equilibrium in the spirit of truthfulness, for to succeed in realizing my Self I am compelled to do so. But to effect this inward order, man, even the deepest, is not ripe from the first ; only a metamorphosis creates in him the new state at once demanded and desired. It is in this that the profound significance of suffering lies.'

Christianity does not dwell on suffering as such : it demands *acceptance of suffering and consent to suffering*, for the sake of truthfulness. Primarily in the sense that this life, the greater part of it at any rate, is painful, and truthfulness demands of man that he should confess life as it really is ; secondly and chiefly in the sense that only emphasis on truthfulness as such allows Spirit to grow.

The conception of openness to the world which we have set forth in the first chapter would thus have put us in touch with that of awakenedness and so with an ever deeper significance. Only a complete experience of the whole of reality as it actually is, corresponds to the specific character of man who is open to all the world, progressive, and in principle never fixed. For it is only on the basis of renouncing all that puts blinkers on his eyes and protects him from pain that his deepest being succeeds in getting into direct relation with the world. On the other hand it is only in this relation that he can perfectly realize himself. He must, moreover, pursue this realization of himself under the flag of absolute truthfulness. But at the same time this increasing opening of himself signifies increasing awakening, awakening meaning just that the man becomes capable of owing to himself an ever greater number of truths : a man fast asleep and dreaming could not *own* anything to himself. The Christian impulse therefore *corresponds* on the plane of

sense, better than any other historically important impulse, to what is primary and original in man, who is the sensitive animal, feeling, loving, noticing everything, the awakened animal *par excellence*. The saying *Anima naturaliter christiana est* tells the truth. What is essential in the movement set going by the Christian impulse is that it signifies an ascent towards a determination by Spirit never previously realized on earth. But whence comes the privileged rank assigned in this process to suffering and the bearing of pain? It comes from the fact that *only what gives pain, gives bad pain, takes possession of the whole man*. It is for this reason and in this respect that the acceptance of suffering and consent to it, as taught by Christ, opens to us the shortest road to the goal.

In saying this we have established between the respective positions of the Buddha's doctrine and Christ's the profound relation which actually exists. In what is fundamental these two great spirits were closely akin. But what we have said shows, on the other hand, in what respect they differed radically from each other and how far the more profound spiritually Jesus was of the two. The Buddha was more 'awakened' than Christ; and so far he is precisely for our days a star of the first magnitude to guide the march of humanity. But he did not teach consent to suffering; quite the contrary: he taught the abolition of suffering by means of a regular process of psycho-analysis. For this reason Buddhism in his day could not initiate any historical progress: as happens with all analysis, the Buddha's, when all was said and done, left the earth-man much as it found him, however much truth there may have been in his teaching about the Beyond. For on earth being is transformed only by one inward decision after another, and by contact with a reality so complete that the whole human being can be possessed and influenced by it. This difference at the same time shows us with unmistakable plainness how absurd it is to try to see in Christ, as some men do, a hero in the accepted sense of this warlike term. Certainly the

courage to surrender oneself to any suffering and so to accept the Cross is a supreme courage. So what Jesus did was, without the slightest doubt, an act of heroism, but in the particular sense of the Russian word *pódwig* which means victory in battle *as well*, but *primarily* victory over oneself. Accordingly the personal man who achieves a *pódwig* is in Russian thought *podwishnik*, one who is climbing higher and higher along the road to sainthood. But if we want words to mark clear distinctions, it could not be said that Jesus was a hero ; He was the exact opposite of the hero : He was the man who suffers without rebelling, ' the man of sorrows ' as the mystics say, the man of the Passion. Only He was so in a *positive* sense, and not in the negative one in which the spiritually blind—who in these days are legion—look upon the Christian ; He was not a weak man, not one of those who shirk difficulties and seek peace at any price. He accepted just what was painful with full consciousness of what He was doing, in a completely awakened state ; He consented to the same experience as the fighting man, with this difference that the latter usually seeks to render himself insensible to the sharpness of suffering, by drowning the painful experience in the still more intense experience of passions let loose. But Christ endured suffering in quite another sense than Ulysses the ' much enduring man.' Many very unpleasant things certainly happened to this ' divine sufferer ' Ulysses and he did not fail to complain of them, but that did not change him in any way. Besides, the Greeks never supposed for a moment that there could be anything positive in his sufferings. For them tragedy without any way out was the last word about suffering. Christian suffering proper on the contrary means, I cannot repeat it enough, consent to suffering, under the banner of truth and truthfulness, this consent being the only road which leads to regeneration and inward transformation.

This fact makes a radical distinction between the Christ-myth and all the countless other myths which set

before us suffering, dying, and risen gods. It is true that the Christian myth has absorbed all others of the same kind which remained alive, into the sphere of its triumphant expansion, so that historical reflexion, and textual exegesis, have often great difficulty in determining where the one begins and the others end. But in everything which touches the essence of the problems, as we said before, these disciplines can never have the last word. The myth of the tortured and dying god, in itself as old as the hills, was understood by Christianity, and by it alone, in a completely new sense ; what in this world of earth is an evil may for Spirit quite well be the means of attaining the ultimate liberation of Self, so that Deity itself has not deemed it beneath it to suffer the most shameful of deaths. The suffering and dying gods before Jesus were only ' much enduring men ' of the same kind as the divine Ulysses, they were in reality heroes of tragedy belonging to the category in which so many neo-Germans by misunderstanding have placed Christ Himself. And in proportion as they were heroes, their existence was impersonal and objective in the sense determined above, that is to say, what was essential in this existence was not the intimate personal experience with its personal consequences, but the objective historical state of facts with its externally apprehensible consequences. Now it cannot be denied that not only Paul, but Jesus Himself, thought in a similar fashion : for Jesus too, it was the objectively existing scheme of salvation which was decisive. But this only shows in a particularly startling fashion, the small importance of the historical factor in religion and metaphysics : it is spiritual *Being* which is decisive here, and it is not necessary that the vehicle of it should comprehend it exactly, for every man, even he who is greatest and most free in spirit, is bound inwardly by the tradition in which he has grown up. Whatever not only Paul, but Jesus Himself, may have thought—the real, original, essential truth of Christianity is the one which from century to century has disengaged itself more

and more plainly from the shell of the contingent, and has revealed itself in its differential mode of being. It cannot be proclaimed loudly enough to-day, for the whole future of what has been gained in the Christian era depends on it : the truth of Christian truth is independent of the truth of Jewish or pre-Christian eschatology, independent of whether the ideas of redemption by sacrifice, of original sin, or of sin in any one of its numerous Christian significations, are in conformity with reality or not—in short, the truth of Christian truth is absolutely independent of any determinate system of dogma. Quite the contrary : all dogmas and all doctrines represent simply so many attempts to gather up original Christian experience into an intellectually transmissible form. The more the Christian Unconscious remained captive to pre-Christian ideas the more difficult obviously it was to succeed in these attempts ; it was then at the very beginning of our era that they had least chance of succeeding. Besides, no definite doctrine can be drawn from the text, nor even from the teaching on which it is based ; they are all as it were read between the lines or, more accurately, projected like invisible writing upon a text in which they do not figure : they are *projected readings*, a term not hitherto employed but important and necessary because a very large part of what exists on the plane of Spirit has its original foundation in such projections. Everyone knows that the dramatic poet needs material which is supplied to him from outside, a ' subject ' ; he dives into it, and from this dive will be born later a creation so original that no one will ever give the least thought to the borrowing which gave birth to it. Now every man on the path of self-realization proceeds like the dramatic poet. All that is Spirit realizes itself in our world by projecting itself, but can project itself only upon what is already given. Now the more the Spirit is possessed by this datum, in the sense defined above, the more original will be the character of the new creation born of this projection, the more personal will it appear and not, as might

be thought, the more borrowed. It is in this way that we can explain the fact at first sight so disconcerting, that over and over again men have made a particular book contain the entire Universe, just by means of 'projected readings'—I am not thinking here of sacred texts alone, but just as much of the *Odyssey*, the Greek handbook of morals, of the *Divine Comedy*, of *Faust*, and in our own days of *Mein Kampf* for the new Germany—and that from one and the same text, about the exact interpretation of which there has besides been sincere controversy, the most different and most contradictory theodicies, theologies, and philosophies have proceeded. It does not follow, let us note, that this way of proceeding is to be condemned; on the contrary, we must deduce from it how much the majority of men feel the vital need to believe in some text or other suggested to them from outside. It is because they can succeed by no other means in consciously realizing what lives in the depths of themselves.

The differential meaning of the symbol of the Cross as opposed to that of the Eagle, and so of Christianity as opposed to the paganism of antiquity is, expressed in the language of the best present-day thought, as follows: suffering accepted and endured in a spirit of truthfulness transforms the man, and so accelerates the process of the break-in of Spirit in a given individual. In one respect at least the Christian spirit not only lies at the opposite pole from the heroic spirit of old, but represents the direct contrary of it: while the latter forbade dwelling on suffering, the former rests wholly upon *the owning of suffering to oneself*. If outward victories are most easily gained by getting rid of the personal experience with a light laugh, inward progress is wholly bound up with a conscious surrender to the process of personal experience in all its phases. And this inward progress was the only aim recognized by primitive Christianity. As no other religion has ever done, it subordinated everything to growth in the Spirit. All that favours this growth is good, all that hampers it is of the realm of Evil. Thus

suffering asserts itself as preferable to triumph. For only the man who unreservedly confesses to himself what goes on within him, only he who by concentrating his attention upon it intensifies and deepens his experience as much as possible, only he reaches a grade of spiritualization higher than the one from which he started. Now such avowal is always without exception bound up with sorrow and suffering. The Self-analysis, examination of conscience, struggles with himself, victory over himself by which man rises above himself, remorse—all these are inward changes which are painful. And only he who in this case does not render himself insensible to *any* pain, no matter what kind it be, but on the contrary consents to every pain under the banner of ultimate truthfulness, only this man rises in the scale.

This, when it is a question of realizing the ideal of the Cross, gives a privileged position to the man of action in comparison with the contemplative. Only the man who really commits evil or whom it really affects, completely works out the evil he bears within him, that is, the man whom the massive reality of evil compels to struggle with the angel of darkness and to gain the mastery over it in real practical life. And few indeed are those for whose Life purely inward experience and especially the products of their imagination have a vital significance so great that this exclusively inward domain has all the efficient force of Karma and of Fate. But this is not all. In the Bhagavat-Gita the god Krishna urges Arjuna, to whom nevertheless he reveals the intimate truth, to fulfil his Dharma as man of action by fighting against and, if possible, slaying the parents he loves so well : the moral of this story is that our task is to endure and to live to the full, ' to the dregs ' if we may say so, the inner conflict willed by Fate. Now only the man of action falls into such plights, never the theorist. Only the man of action is led to take upon himself genuine guilt, to bear the responsibility of irreparable wrongdoings, and to do the evil ' which creates good ' in the words of Goethe, and

yet all the time to own to himself that it is wholly evil. This is why history records of so many men who were spiritually the greatest of all lands and of all times, that they were born bad. This is why there is not a single theorist to be found among them. This is why so many of them were of royal stock or sprung from the oldest aristocracy. This is why the warrior class has furnished a much more important number of saints, and in particular of Christian saints, than one would have expected.

The way of the Cross, of the Cross accepted, consented to, and willingly borne, is thus in reality *the* way which leads to the highest degree of spiritualization attainable on earth. The paradoxical character of this state of things accounts for all the exaggerations of the truth which have over and over again found credence : for instance, the insistence upon and even the glorification of disgrace, of shame, of infamy, of poverty, ugliness, and sickness. Such exaggerations *are not*, in their deepest meaning, reactions from, or counterweights in reference to, the heroic spirit of antiquity, but simply over-emphasis of the truth that it is the most intense possessedness in a right inward attitude which calls forth the most profound and most creative inward transformations. This accounts for those epidemics of ' desire to suffer ' which are always prevalent anew in Christendom, whether it is a question of flagellation or of some other mode of mortification, as well as for the unparalleled concourse of hearers which those rough harsh preachers who exhort their hearers to the severest penances have met with in all ages even outside the Christian world. No Florentine, in the most brilliant period of Florence's artistic flowering time, enjoyed the popular success which Savonarola did when he commanded that all beauty should be sacrificed. Here it is a question of something quite different from that mortification of the flesh the technique of which has been raised to a fine art among the Hindus and Tibetans. These latter attribute no value to suffering as such : the aim of their asceticism is simply to steel the



will, to free the Spirit from its fetters, to develop the soul by means of a training of proved efficacy. Among the Yogi (as also among the Jesuits), the accent is no more laid on suffering than it is on physical pain in the training of an athlete. In the eyes of the Christian, on the contrary, who is willing to bear his Cross, the suffering to which he consents and of which he emphasizes the importance represents the way to Salvation.

Here, considered in the setting of Western history, is the individual aspect of what constitutes the kernel of Christianity. Its social aspect arises from the fact that personal suffering, as soon as it is accentuated, creates the aptitude for compassion for others. Thus acceptance of suffering awakens in man the need to make the world better. One is horror-stricken when one faces the plain fact that great spirits like Plato and Aristotle considered slavery a perfectly natural thing. They never doubted for an instant that a free man had the right to inflict on slaves—who perhaps had been kings overnight—treatment beneath the dignity of man, or even to ill-treat them if he saw fit. They were absolutely lacking in that imagination of heart, which even to-day is wanting in the vast majority of Asiatics. For this imagination only awakens in man when he consents to his own suffering and emphasizes it. It is only too possible psychologically—too great a bulk of experience proves it beyond doubt—that men otherwise profound and good ill-treat most cruelly and remorselessly any others whom they consider their inferiors, if they have never acknowledged to themselves their own suffering. Let us look from this point of view, at the commonest phenomena not of the pre-Christian, but of the Christian era : the eternal validity of the message of the Cross cannot fail to strike us. In the age in which we live, it is just the common people, whose life is hard and who, to hold out at all, are compelled to be hard on themselves, who are the most merciless towards their fellows. Seldom do they allow each other the right to be ill ; seldom do they spare each other ;

they rarely have any sympathy for those of their number who have lost their livelihood. Among peasants whose fundamental characteristics are, all the world over (I do not know why), avarice and greed of gain—one meets only too often with a state of things like that in Switzerland of which Jeremias Gotthelf has given us such a harrowing picture : the poor man is, quite as a matter of course, despised, ridiculed, and treated as an outlaw, so far as the laws in force allow. This harshness of the common people is infinitely more cruel than all the harshness displayed by the great in their pride of rank, for if the man who by birth or office has a high position does not recognize the same rights in his inferiors as in himself, he is at any rate never envious and generally does good, as he understands it, willingly. But where the upper strata of a society are harsh and cruel to their inferiors, that is always related to their hardness to themselves. Everywhere where men are harsh towards themselves the Roman saying applies : *Homo homini lupus*. And there is only one means of awakening imagination of heart, and so compassion, and that is acknowledging to oneself one's own suffering.

When man has made this avowal from the bottom of his heart, harshness, in the long run, melts away of itself ; it ceases to be livable physiologically. This explains the fact that in spite of the harshness of Jesus towards Himself, and towards those who were not His disciples, in spite of the cruel and loveless ideas which even to-day, owing to a too literal belief in texts dating from pre-Christian age, are frequently associated with the religion of love, the impulse given by Christ has led slowly, but irresistibly, to an increasing humanization, and why, on the other hand, nothing but the impulse given by Christ could have led to it. Neither in Hindu *bhakti*, nor in Buddhist compassion, nor in the cultivation of the feelings as taught by Confucius is to be found this impulse which urges us to render the life of *all* men easier and better. The Hindu thinks only of his lonely Self ; it is for love of

this Self, and not of other men, that he ought to do good. The typical Chinese was good only to those to whom he was bound by relationships canonically recognized. No man, who has not been reached by the impulse from Christ, knows by his own personal experience the inward attitude of the Christian towards his own suffering. In this attitude his personal Passion leads, by a creative transformation of the soul, to com-passion for all suffering of others : it leads the Christian to bear not his own Cross alone, but all the Crosses of all men. In this lies the *eternal* significance of the death of Jesus for the Salvation of the world. No other religion has produced by its own power, or set up as ideals, Saints like Dostoiewsky's Staretz Sossima, who sincerely declared himself guilty of all the crimes of other men, being one with them. Without at any rate an unconscious participation in the impulses given by Christ, the humility of Rama-Krishna would never have seen the light. It is because we have received this impulse from Christ that we Western men, originally poorer in love than the Orientals, have deduced from the potentiality of compassion most of the practical consequences which it contained ; these henceforward act according to their own inner law, not always in us it is true, but to make up for that, by transformation due to contact, in other peoples—however unworthy we may have become of the truths which are always on our lips. This is just because the Christian attitude as such, as 'cosmic position' awakens and favours and shapes and intensifies the imagination of the heart. The man in whom this has awakened to fulness of life, thenceforward to exercise sovereign power over his whole life, feels the suffering of another as directly and personally as he feels his own. More indeed. For at bottom all men can bear their own suffering : that of another, on the contrary, only those can bear who are lacking in imagination, for to Spirit whose life is passed on the plane of images, representation counts for more than the actual state of fact. But the direction of the imagination towards others

depends on the position of the accent of importance, and a man is free to accent what he himself chooses. To have made this new accentuation a dominant fact in history, is the exploit by which Christianity has deserved well of mankind.

IF WE THINK OVER, FROM THIS STARTING-POINT, WHAT was set forth in the long note on page 42 in the chapter 'Truthfulness,' we shall understand clearly why the Germans were predestined to be converted to Christianity. Of a race of men which is by nature entirely centred on lived experience, inward growth, inward transformation, it may be said with more truth than of any other that its soul is *naturaliter christiana*, a consideration which proves once again that belonging to the Christian cosmos is not primarily a question of formularies of belief, nor even of religion, but of psychology. It appears clearly, moreover, that the feeling about life which the Nordic pagans had was not like that of the pagans of classical antiquity absolutely incompatible with the Christian feeling about it, it much rather represented a preliminary stage of the latter. That passionate search for a tragedy from which there is no escape, that gloomy willingness to die which nothing softens, that firm belief in a final catastrophe which man should not even try to stave off, that mania for keeping faith and one's sworn word, just where man knew consciously that by so doing he would inevitably bring down misfortune upon those he held most dear—all these expressions of a 'heroism devoid of sense' as I have called it in *Deutschlands wahre politische Mission*, all this cried aloud for Christianity, for only Christianity could give such an orientation of life a spiritual significance. Only the path of self-examination, of consent to one's inward destiny and more generally of interiorization could prove fruitful for a soul constituted

like the German soul. The germinal character of his *Gemüt* hinders the German from ever, as an Eagle-Man, reaching a high level of perfection. Hence the differential character of the best type of German warrior. Even before his conversion the soul of the Germanic warrior was *naturaliter christiana* and this is why Christian truth penetrated more deeply into this warrior than into any other. In the depths of his heart the German warrior wishes not so much to conquer as to die. It is on self-sacrifice that the accent of importance is laid for him. He knows nothing of the sweetness of death for the ancient Greeks, he knows only the bitterness of death. Hence the exaggerated character of the German official cult of obedience and loyalty, hence also the exclusively German conception of duty: in German the very sound of this word,<sup>1</sup> harsh and inflexible as it is, is enough to make one feel that duty must be accomplished not merely against one's natural inclinations, but also against every personal conviction and every interest properly understood. This is at the same time the ground of the fact that Germany always supplied the largest number of foot-soldiers and other mercenaries: it is not the cause for which they are fighting that matters to the Germans: moved by an intrinsic consent to death they fight for anything or anybody, it matters little what. This is why Hindenburg, prototype of the German as he was, appeared greater when, fulfilling to the end his mandate as commander-in-chief, he led his troops home again, and when later he lent the weight of his authority to governments and political systems which could only be hateful to him at the bottom of his heart, than he ever did as a victorious general. As for German officers as a body, they were at all great epochs more to be compared to an order like the Templars of the Teutonic Knights than to a body of the same kind in any other nation. Looked at from outside the life of the German soldier is the very type of the 'objective' heroic life: the Self signifies nothing; the

<sup>1</sup> *Pflichterfullung*.

nation, the Fatherland, action, success, the posthumous glory which he will no longer experience personally, these are all that matters. And yet no deep and genuine German sees the great soldier under this strictly objective aspect. On the contrary he lays the whole accent of importance on this fact that the sacrifice of everything that properly belongs to him is of all roads the one which can lead, by the simple play of psycho-chemical laws, to the deepest spiritualization. For inevitably the Spirit grows from one personal decision to another, from one responsibility shouldered to another, from one sacrifice to another, provided he struggles against himself. Thus in the depth of his heart the great German warrior is not in the least an Eagle-Man, but an eminently Christian type.

It is none the less true that a warrior, as such, could not be a man who embodies the symbol of the Cross in all its purity. And it is by starting from this fact that we shall succeed in determining what distinguishes developed Christianity from primitive. The latter laid the whole accent of importance on the pole of suffering, upon the Cross ; the Eagle it rejected. But things did not stop there. When the Roman Empire became Christian, the Eagle itself was converted to the Cross. Thenceforward all further evolution took place under these *two* signs jointly, and *it is this synthesis of the two symbols on a higher plane which has determined the whole evolution of Christian mankind*. The teaching of Jesus and of Paul was purely Oriental in spirit. But the history proper of Christianity has unrolled itself in the West ; it is Western not only by climate, but also in spirit—and it is significant that the only great Church which has remained Oriental, the orthodox Greek Church, does not admit of historical development. Conquerors of the world on the one hand, suffering gods on the other, those are throughout the world the subjects of the oldest myths. With Jesus and His first great disciples, suffering was discovered and recognized as the mainspring of all inward elevation, and so as the very threshold of Salvation. But Western Christianity

when fully developed, created a new synthesis which primitive Christianity had never foreseen : an integration on a higher plane of the Christian and the pre-Christian worlds. The two poles of the Eagle and the Cross, both alive in every man, both equally necessary to life, were united in this integration in a wondrous harmony. This perfect accord has a much deeper significance than the correlation of the two principles which the Greeks denoted by *ethos* and *pathos* and the Chinese by *Yang* and *Yin* (‘ what is creative ’ and ‘ what is receptive ’) : it signifies just that man has overcome the division expressed by the formula ‘ of two things one,’ the most distinct expressions of which are on the natural plane, the polarity between man and woman, and on the moral plane the opposition between Good and Evil. It is strange that Nietzsche never noticed this : it is just fully developed Christianity which is, in the only acceptable sense of the formula, ‘ beyond Good and Evil.’ This Christianity has never denied that suffering is an evil, but it has recognized at the same time that it may be means to good. It has never denied that it is wrong to kill, and yet it has agreed, within certain limits, to all the manifestations of the Eagle-principle. It has combined the Eagle and the Cross in an intensive unity.

This unity has found its most perfect expression in the most profoundly Christian of all the creations of Christianity : chivalry. It is not the result of chance, but of the strictest necessity, that the most Christian ages have been the most chivalrous and vice versa. Neither the classical pagan nor the Nordic one were chivalrous, and nothing is more characteristic of the neo-paganism of our own days than the irresistible withering of all the values of chivalry. The knightly spirit presupposes a mutual interpenetration, a marriage, if one may call it so, of the Eagle and the Cross. The warrior of knightly spirit accepts the weakness of the weak and respects it ; his own nobleness forbids him to plunder them or have them at his mercy, and commands him to protect them. The

knight feels himself bound by an ideal which represents death as the gate by which he may draw near to re-birth—an idea totally foreign to the pure Eagle-Man. For the knightly warrior honour takes precedence of victory ; conquered, defeat does not humiliate him ; conqueror, he will not humiliate his adversary. Proud outwardly and eager for the fight, he is inwardly humble and ready for suffering. To kill, to destroy, and so to burden himself with tragic crime, these experiences are inseparably his, but they are combined in him with other experiences inseparable from his being : consciousness of sin, consent given beforehand to suffering, humility before God. Here the ethos and the pathos are so perfectly intermingled that it is difficult to draw any strict line between pride and humility, between consciousness of sin and consent to tragedy, between a heroic death and death upon the Cross. For the knightly man honour never means consideration or good fame ; honour is the affirmation of his purely personal integrity which is conditioned only from within ; that is why his motto is : ‘ to every man all honour,’ that is why it never occurs to him to humiliate his enemy. That is why, finally, courtesy stands in the first rank of knightly virtues. It is clearly impossible to love all men : feelings cannot be commanded. It is perfectly possible, on the contrary, to show by the way in which we address other people and by our general behaviour towards them, that we recognize in all men as subjective beings a complete equality of rights. That is why the courtesy which performs this office has an infinitely deeper significance than all good nature and uprightness. During the period of the general upheaval of all the earth-forces which we are passing through, this particular point needs to be insisted on. It is no proof of profundity to refuse to see in courtesy a quite outstanding value, on the contrary, it is to show oneself spiritually shallow. One would have to be mad, of course, to expect from a volcano or high tide that it should abandon its savagery and show consideration.



And on the other hand there is this Delicadeza of which we have spoken at length in Chapter VIII of the *Meditations*; a refinement which springs simply from fear of disagreeable impressions—and whose demands are therefore incompatible with those of truthfulness. Delicadeza is of no spiritual importance, though all beauty on this earth exists only as a refined development of Delicadeza. But courtesy which is the true politeness consists in accepting and respecting as an unimpaired privilege the particular being, the uniqueness of others, it is the only certain means of giving no offence to it, the only means of consecrating it by an intelligible assent. That is why the man who is deficient in a sense of the value of courtesy proves his want of spirituality. We know that St. Francis of Assisi was convinced that in creating the sun, moon, and everything that is lovely and good on earth, God had acted out of courtesy.

So much for courtesy as one of the cardinal knightly virtues. But primarily the chivalrous man lives wholly under the sign—the most Christian of all—of the ideal of truthfulness, and the mere possibility of treating courtesy and truthfulness as knightly attributes one after the other, without any break between, shows the profound value of the former. It is unworthy of a knight to tell a lie, unworthy of him to deceive others. A man must keep his word without any conditions. He ought to be content with what he really is, to be modest in the only sense of modesty which has any real value,<sup>1</sup> which forbids him to try to pass himself off for what he is not. He ought to have the courage to face things as they really are. Seen from this angle the exact sciences of our Western civilization are not to be traced back primarily to the instinct for knowledge, but to the vow which the youth

<sup>1</sup> The following quotation taken from *The Art of Life* explains the play upon words which the German text here contains: 'Modesty is called *Bescheidenheit* in German. *Selbst-Bescheidung* means to accept being such as one is. In this sense the only modesty which can have any value is that which means *sich bei dem bescheiden, was man wirklich ist*, to content oneself with being what one really is.'

takes at the moment when he is sworn a knight ; they are then inconceivable without Christianity. So, arrived at this point we unite in one synthetic image the two essential aspects of the highest type of Christian, the face turned towards the world and the face turned within, and if in so doing we take stock of all the evolution accomplished up to to-day and all whose possibility is proved by experience, we shall be able to say : *the true Christian is the man who in everything he does stakes his all and goes ' to the uttermost.'* Jesus Himself in obedience to His particular mission stakes His all and went ' to the uttermost ' in everything ; all the apostles, all the martyrs, hazarded their all for all. The Church which grew up in the centuries which followed set man in his integrity in a necessary relation to the universe as a whole ; as for the knight he hazarded his whole personality in defence of his truth and honour. The true Christian at every moment pledges himself wholly ; he fights without any thought for his life, he empties the cup of suffering to the dregs, as man of action he achieves his purpose without ever letting go till the victory is won, vowed to contemplation he devotes himself to it entirely as it is, and lastly he endures all suffering without ever trying to lessen its real intensity, and in this sense of the highest truthfulness he holds out to the end—always he pledges himself unreservedly.

Now we can understand with perfect clearness why the impulse given by Christ was bound of necessity to set going a mighty advance, unique in the process of the break-in of Spirit : the command to stake one's all and strive ' to the uttermost,' to the very end, creates in man a readiness, hitherto non-existent, to bring into the world of transformation, to which he is inwardly submitting what is given, all influences and all experiences. Compared to this great work the periods of reaction and even the misconstructions which have converted the Christian truth into its very opposite could have only a minor importance : provided that even one single man behaved

in everything like a genuine Christian, the creative process of the break-in of Spirit would be going on in him.

THE DECHRISTIANIZATION OF CHRISTIAN HUMANITY which, in these last few decades only, has become so manifest that none of those who have eyes to see and ears to hear can any longer deny it, began in reality, we are now in a position to conclude, at the moment when mankind became exclusively activist. Science and technical skill are, no doubt, daughters of the Christian spirit. But their effects, the organic consequences of their essential nature, were positive only so long as they had the synthesis of the Cross and the Eagle as their living background. As soon as, denying the Cross, they began to own obedience exclusively to the Eagle principle, that dehumanization showed itself of which my generation is probably condemned to experience the highest point. From year to year the destructive force of the Eagle has got the upper hand more and more clearly. The Christian virtues go on dying out. Nothing could be less chivalrous than the modern business man, who sacrifices life to figures, or still more the bureaucrat estranged from life for whom a man's record is more than his soul. Nothing is less chivalrous than the spirit of the proletarian who has reached class-consciousness: this is certainly not what Jesus meant when He praised the weak and oppressed. But no more is neo-paganism the child of the knightly spirit. That a system may have the right to proclaim itself the inheritor of the knightly spirit, it is indispensable that it should imply a sincere faith in the absolute primacy of Spirit and recognize it as the final court of appeal. As soon as the spirit of Christian chivalry is denied, the world is handed over to oppression, to persecutions, to constraint of all kinds, and nothing, in

principle, prevents there resulting from this surrender a general situation infinitely more appalling than that of the pagan world under the decline of the Empire. Bolshevism, in this respect, is certainly rich in promises. But it is not the knightly spirit alone which has vanished in smoke in the decomposition of the moral and spiritual body of the old Christianity : inevitably loyalty is going to ruin, and faithfulness to one's oath, and every obligation to the ideal of truthfulness, of which the Christian spirit *alone* has declared itself the champion. Machiavelli and Hobbes have been, in the political sky, the signs which heralded dechristianization. Their spirit to-day governs the ' Christian ' world ; no one, unless he is blind, will deny this. The ideal of truth and of truthfulness itself is beginning to grow dim and its virtue is weakening. Hence the growing hostility of our time to objectivity on the one hand, and to personal conviction on the other, freedom of conscience runs the risk of meeting with an end much like that of the Hellenic ideal of *καλοκαγαθία*.

But the course of history cannot be turned backward : the break-in of Spirit into our dark world is final and nothing will ever dislodge it again. The stage attained with Christianity can never again be traversed in the opposite direction, its results can never be rooted out : they are ' writ large ' in the body of mankind as organic transformation. Inevitably the universal law will be confirmed by which the man who can know must face other demands than the one who does not know, and mistakes must be paid for in direct ratio to the degree of awakenedness attained. That is why frightful sufferings never yet imagined will be the inevitable consequence of all evolution which turns mankind away from the positive gains of Christianity. Just as the era of progress, with its inborn optimism and its moral cowardice, was bound to end in the horrors of the War and the World-Revolution, so the relapse into pre-Christian states of soul will lead inevitably to what the prophets with their terrifying lucidity have prefigured in the pre-messianic anguish. All

men of any depth have reached it already. It is out of the question that a favourable solution can be reached at the end of any one of the purely external directions which are, at the moment when I write these lines, the object of such high hopes. All the true ends, the pursuit of which can bring about a happy solution of this world-crisis, have their dwelling in Man's inner nature : the problem is to reach a degree of transformation by Spirit and penetration by soul, higher still than that which ended in the Christian transformation.

It is because all this is so, that it was necessary in a modern book on the supreme value of the personal life, to make of the eulogy of suffering a Song of Songs. The outward aspect of the world of mankind is certainly as horrible as it has ever been in the worst periods. And more than that a new development shows that the evil is growing steadily worse : man made into an insect by giving himself up entirely to technical work, shuts himself up more than he has ever done against the experience he might have : the soul of the majority is now already sheathed in the insect's coat of mail. This shell which isolates him must be dissolved before evolution can resume its course in an upward direction. All real salvation will come in the future from those, and those alone, who in the depths of their souls have felt the unspeakable bitterness and known the infinite desolation of the times we are passing through. A transformation of external phenomena will soon show that I am speaking the truth. The exclusively Eagle-Men, these blind guides, will disappear in time : soon they will be forgotten. They will end by exterminating each other, or else in a sudden psychic crisis they will collapse : no one can long endure a one-sided emphasizing of the active pole of the vital equilibrium without ever withdrawing into himself again. It follows, once more, that the personal life has capital importance to-day, and cannot be weighed against public life, even against a public life which is distinguished by the most striking civic merits. More

even perhaps than at the beginning of our era is it a question to-day of owning to oneself all suffering and all sorrow, one's own as well as that of the World. More than ever does everything depend on harrowing experience, on the soul being entirely possessed. More than ever to-day is it the individual alone, lonely and unique, who stands for the essential and central mainspring of the world. The unique individual, though he may have irretrievably lost the familiar horizons which he has left behind, in this way sees opening out before him perspective such as the world has never known. Jesus Christ, the man whose like we shall never see, has *died* for all ; each of us to-day may *live* for all. But to rise to this highest life needs a truthfulness which is proof against everything, a courage which knows no bounds, and an absolute loyalty to one's deepest self.

FREEDOM

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HOW HAS IT COME TO PASS THAT IN THE COURSE OF the last century the Western ideal of Freedom, instead of making man greater, has more and more led him astray and made him less? If this fact were not beyond dispute it would be incomprehensible why the most recent spirit of the age is hostile to freedom. This must be, at this crisis in history, our first question about the problem of freedom. Mere theoretical considerations about the ideal, lamentations over its abandonment are of no use whatever, never any use for the personal life. Well, this diminishing action has absolutely nothing to do with freedom in itself. It arises from the fact that more and more men who were not ripe for the freedom which the law had granted and ensured them have begun to interfere in the evolution of history and finally to determine it. In our own day, particularly in Fascist Italy, the ideal of responsibility is frequently opposed to that of freedom as being the higher ideal: now it has never occurred to any authentic representative of the great European tradition that the ideas of freedom and responsibility could be dissociated; no one questioned that the one implied the other. The same undisputed relation holds good of freedom and the duty of the individual to the community. A tradition of the highest antiquity, going back through Christianity to the Stoics, and on another line through the memory of the race to the Nordic heroic ethos, had profoundly moulded the Unconscious of the upper strata,

so profoundly that their culture of freedom, become a spontaneous mode of life, unconsciously led them to objectify as legal right the extreme concept of freedom as extolled by the last century. But the tragedy of man's fate willed once again, as it generally does, alas ! that what from one point of view was the zenith should on the other coincide with an end and a completely fresh beginning which could not have been foreseen. The misfortune was not only that when there were very few men who had any real right to freedom as far as their inward worth went, it was extended to far too great a number, who then turned against the authors of this advance : the misfortune was above all that at the same time the directing classes lost their inward right to this freedom, either because they had already exhausted their vitality, or because the Unconscious of the lower strata had permeated them, as that of the negroes permeated the Unconscious of the whites of North America.<sup>1</sup> But above all there were very soon, quite unexpectedly, a number—far higher than had ever been foreseen—of men who claimed to determine themselves without being in the least capable of it, so that the situation thus created soon gave the lie to all the reigning prejudices. In the Germany of Goethe's day it was hardly more than five thousand men who really counted ; yesterday it was all the millions of adults ; to-day it is even the children : they help to determine public life to a degree that it is difficult to overestimate. Here comes in another train of causes, bound up with the problem of freedom in this sense that it has been made possible only by the emancipation of thought : the triumphal march of technical skill. This latter created new possibilities of existence for so many that the population of Europe went up by leaps and bounds, which started a migration of peoples in a vertical direction, an upheaval much more formidable than that caused by the horizontal migrations of old days. This migration consisted in the strata hitherto deter-

<sup>1</sup> See the detailed exposition of this question in my *America Set Free*.



minant being overlaid by other strata come not from outside as of old, but from the depths of the body social ; it is the most striking characteristic of the whole of our epoch, and since the World War, under the banner of the Wilsonian ideals, it has extended to the entire planet. Among the men alive to-day at most one in ten thousand or in a hundred thousand has inherited the psychic patrimony which was the real basis—laid down as a self-evident datum—of all the traditional doctrines of freedom. The situation is much more critical than it was in the times when the last of the cultivated Romans stood aghast and rigid in dumb misery, watching the death of their Empire. That is why they were Stoics. They were men essentially static : to the shaking of their world by a new power alien to their nature, they could oppose nothing but a perfect inward insensibility. The Elder Cato had already watched the rise of the popular strata represented by the tribunes of the people with the same shake of the head that Bismarck gave before the Socialists of his time. The younger Cato regarded Cæsar pretty much as France may regard Germany's rejuvenation after her defeat of yesterday. Lastly, Marcus Aurelius, giving up the struggle, certainly took his personal meditations much more seriously than he did his position as Emperor. What happened then on a relatively reduced scale, has become historically dominant to-day over the whole planet : the ideals which the era of liberalism defended were cut to the stature of men psychologically very different from those who later have benefited by their embodiment in laws.

How decisive this hereditary psychological difference is, how far it is tradition, in the widest sense of the term, which plays the part attributed by some in our days to blood alone, two examples which anyone can verify will show more clearly than any theoretical exposition ; first, the psychological difference between France and Germany, and then that between Germany, the heir of Charlemagne, and Prussia. My proof of the first will be

based on the writings of Ernest Seillière : no foreigner for two hundred years has treated all the aspects of Germanism (in the sense confined to Germany which the French give the word), so completely, nor with such a sincere desire to comprehend, and yet from premisses so profoundly French. For Seillière *normal* Europe is the one which has its roots in the world of antiquity, a Europe formed in the school of Stoic tradition, and then of Christian tradition, which reached its zenith in the two so-called classical centuries, those to which France gave the tone. In all that he calls naturism or romanticism—a movement which became spiritually conscious for the first time in England, awakened fully in Rousseau, but only reached the rank of historic dominant in the German world—Seillière sees a regrettable deviation or decadence. But he does not think this as a rationalist, in the bad sense which Germans give to this term : for Seillière reason is nothing else than the particular race-experience matured, purified, and become a heritage to be freely handed on, which in the West reaches from Mediterranean antiquity, through medieval Christianity, down to classicism. For him who looks at history from the planetary angle, Seillière's point of view is distinctly exaggerated : the classical tradition, concentrated in an inherited and hereditary *reason*, is a unique exception and not the rule. If we absolutely insist on preserving the concept 'romanticism,' we must say that 'man in himself' is romantic, that is to say, a creature sprung from the soil like a plant, though, to be sure, he is not naturally good, as Western naturism has, unfortunately for us, believed for so long, and is beginning to believe again in one of those variants which it presents to-day. This illusion of the natural goodness of man, into which the Western world has been decoyed, is one of the chief causes of this eruption of the underworld, which since the World War is determining and horribly disfiguring the existent face of the world.

But if we abstract from what is a failure or a distortion in the general perspective of the picture offered to us by

Seillière, and if we start from the unquestionable existence of the 'heritage of reason'—in Seillière's sense of the words—which has determined our history down to the World-Revolution, the problem takes on another aspect : then Seillière is right in claiming that romanticism has led to an uprooting of all European tradition by undermining its foundations. For the French Revolution too, in his eyes, is, a good half of it, romantic in character : it was so indeed so far and so long as it postulated 'the natural man.' The world of antiquity and the Christian world had bequeathed to us a whole system of framework intended to support man and keep him from straying : no doubt the process which in all likelihood has reached its highest point, for Europe at least, in the present revolt of the earth-forces, has been in essentials a process of bursting these frames ; more accurately, it has destroyed this scaffolding work, and levelled those superstructures which our traditional cultures had built up ; now that they are thrown down, we see, as is perfectly logical, what they overlaid reappearing : a tradition older than our own, indeed the oldest of all. Hence the retrospective ideal of the mythical man as opposed to the progressive man, hence also the fact that Germany is rediscovering her Germanic heritage, is remembering her prehistoric past. Now this tradition, which not Seillière alone but the whole of France considered *the* European tradition *par excellence*, signified, to define it by an abstract formula, that the spiritual principle (which in this setting assumes first and foremost the aspect of freedom), was embodied progressively in instincts, feelings, emotions, impulses, habits, and forms of life. To say the same thing in a more condensed, but just for this reason, more accurate and more concrete form : at the limit, where the highest form was attained, the Stoic could not help being unshakable, the Christian could not help being governed by his freedom to do good, the upright man and later the well-bred man could not help being representatives of a total obedience to Spirit which dominated them entirely : this

perfect incarnation of Spirit which showed itself in the grace of their outward bearing, and the delicacy of their intercourse, was the supreme expression of the traditional European culture. The idea of an absolutely complete liberty, such as governed the last decades before the World War, related in all respects to this disciplined type of culture the heir of tradition of antiquity and Christianity, and to this alone. In this type, inward freedom and outward obligations, consciousness of self and duties to the community, responsibility and discipline formed an indissoluble synthesis. In this sense the good European issued from the French mould, was characterized, to use Seillière's expression, by the co-existence, regarded as a matter of course, 'of aristocratic heroism, of honour, of courtesy, of gallantry, and of nobleness of spirit.' This type of man was more free inwardly than any European had ever been. On the other hand he was inwardly above and beyond all the antitheses which govern the different ideologies born of the World-Revolution.

We come now to the point which made me select France as an example : in France an extremely ancient tradition had so profoundly permeated all strata of the population, had given them a form so solid and so sure, that the extinction of the old families and their disappearance from the stage of history on the one hand, and on the other the fact that types of men representing a less valuable tradition soon formed the majority and took the helm, did not radically change the picture presented by the country ; this change of guidance did not have the results which it had had in the decline of the antique world when the soul of the slaves invaded that of their Roman masters : on the contrary, the lower strata remained, in a nowise negligible degree, possessed by the spirit of the dethroned upper strata. Hence the fact that through all its crises the country has preserved its attachment to the individualist ideal of freedom ; hence its special feeling for harmony, its tenacity, more generally its power of 'holding on,' as the War proved. The

French Revolution had relied upon 'the natural man' as premiss of its ideology. But its classical and Christian inheritance had an influence so strong that we were soon faced with a restoration of the old state of things, on a new and wider basis. A restoration which was not complete, of course—there has never been any restoration in the strict sense of the term. Metternich wrote somewhere that before the Revolution all Europe tried in vain to equal the French in distinction and good manners, whereas twenty years later there was hardly a man of distinction to be met with in the whole of Paris. A German memoir-writer of great merit, Count Hugo Lerchenfeld, the Bavarian ambassador at the Court of William II, writes to the same effect, that there was no genuine distinction to be found at the Court of Napoleon III. It is certain that what France succeeded in saving of her great days, throughout the agony of the Revolution, corresponded at most to the spirit and manners of the old official nobility. Which is in spite of all infinitely more than what is left of the English who emigrated to America, or what will survive in Germany of the German tradition of the nineteenth century. We may then speak of restoration, though a relative one, and that obviously since Napoleon. The latter's resemblance to a Roman emperor is symptomatic in the same way as Stalin's increasing resemblance to the Tartar Khans who reigned over Russia from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

We can understand better from this point of view than from any other the problem of the new Germany, so far as it comes into the train of ideas in this chapter. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, all the notable representatives of the upper strata of Germany still, as a whole, carried on the same European tradition as the French—though they were otherwise, as Germans, very different from the latter. Unquestionably the Reformation had considerably shaken and weakened the foundations of this tradition, and thus allowed exclusively

Germanic or exclusively Nordic elements to get the upper hand, more and more plainly, in the German soul. (In the same way France is becoming more and more Latin as her upper strata of Frankish blood lose power.) It is none the less true that the classical ideal, as understood by the Romans, is still alive to-day in the consciousness of all strata of the German people ; recent instances prove this clearly. The deep influence of Stefan George, a recessive Roman (to use Mendel's term), the relationship of Ludwig Klages, who carried all German romanticism to extremes, to Alfred Schuler, who looked upon himself as the reincarnation of an ancient Roman ; lastly, on a larger scale, the persuasive and attractive power of the ideal of antiquity in its Fascist re-birth. If the German spirit, so long as it was animated by the European tradition, inclined chiefly towards the Hellenic ideal, it was because the Greeks, too, suffered life rather than moulded it, thought and created rather than affirmed a being, its instinct led it later to transfer its ideal all the more explicitly to the Roman, whose whole greatness lay in being. But for a long time the majority of Germans, in the depth of their hearts, were no longer really sharers in the classical ideal. Hence the predominance of the German ideal of *Bildung* (a term half-way between culture and education), for which knowing is of more value than being. Hence the really grotesque veneration which the learned man has enjoyed since the Reformation ; hence the classical ideal of the age of German ' classics ' under the star of Goethe's Weimar ; hence, finally, the tremendous respect paid by all classes of the German people, and above all the common people, to the man with a University education. The outside world, with a sure instinct, has since the Reformation recognized only two German types as properly representative : the princes and the professors. The former, if one may say so, because they still embodied the largest measure of the old European spirit, the latter because they knew most about it.

But it was impossible that Germany should for long recognize her own highest form in a shape so uncertain, nay more, so artificial. *Hence* the rise of Prussia on the one hand, and on the other the separation of Austria, where Spanish influence gave new life and spirit to the old tradition at the very moment when it was beginning to crumble away at the heart of the Empire. Here we are concerned with Prussia alone. No one understands the first word about Prussianism who does not see in Frederick the Great, who raised to a world-factor that spirit of Prussia which before was a mere provincialism and might just as well have remained so, above all the perfect representative of the French eighteenth century, the true great European. But just because he was a man of this type, Frederick recognized that his subjects were no longer Europeans, but that the overwhelming majority of them were, if not Slavs by blood, yet in the unconscious depths of their soul possessed by the spirit of the native Slav population. Thus there was born, formed by his master-hand or modelled on his example, that harsh, sober, austere Prussian type, on the one hand highly spiritualized, but on the other, presupposing in the man who embodied it, a formation working from without inward, and not vice versa as was the case with classical Europe. The lower strata, of a totally different kind, which the Germans found in the North-East, and whose Unconscious transformed into its own image the pure-blooded German immigrants who did not belong to the overlord class, could only be treated in one way by Germanism: they had to be led and organized. Thus the Prussian lord became more and more a leader one-sided but extremely capable, while his other qualities were gradually atrophied. In this and not in Spengler's contrast between the 'Teutonic knight' and the Viking lies the living root of the Prussian type. For this reason the type is not the expression of an eternal idea as Moeller van den Brück erroneously believed. This type presupposes for its arising as well as for its continued existence a

psychological difference as an organic permanent state, leaders and led being of a different character. And just because this is so Germany had to become more and more Prussian, as the former lower strata, owing to growth of population and democratization began to be determinant, and North Germany, thanks to its tenacity and love of work, increased its specific weight in Germany as a whole. Since the World War we have been witnessing a Pan-Germanization of Prussianism. I use this expression, which at first has another and remoter significance, to let it be known by the sound of the word, that we are dealing with something quite different from the completion of a process of Prussianizing Germany in that transformation of it into one people under the banner of National-Socialism of which the Weimar epoch was the incubation period. To be sure, the fundamental Prussian order, based on the principles of leadership and obedience, is stamped even more clearly upon the National-Socialist State than on the Prussian. But on the other hand there is to-day no longer any contrast between authority and the people: the people *itself* articulates itself in conformity with Prussian principles. Thus the whole soul of Germany is absorbing Prussianism. The difference between those born to rule and those born to obey is disappearing, the spirit of the people is taking the place of that of the overlord class of old, and the spontaneous result is a renewal or rebirth of the pre-Prussian state of things. On the other hand the Pan-German spirit no longer breathes the air of the traditional *German freedom*, that spirit of unbridled independence which characterized above all the traditional life of a German student. This is accounted for socially and historically by the fact that the organic premisses of the liberal ideal of freedom are dead. To show this clearly it is enough to recall one simple historical fact. From the philological point of view the word 'liberal' evidently comes from the Latin *liberalis* which had very nearly the meaning of 'generous.' But history teaches us that the



word 'liberal' as Europe has been using it for the last three centuries comes to us from Spain, where it appeared in the seventeenth century. It denoted then the essential nature of the ideal nobleman ; consequently its opposite was neither 'aristocratic' nor 'authoritarian' nor 'reactionary,' but 'servile,' that is to say, proper to a servant. So words change their meaning in course of time ; but the word is *always* the bodily envelope of a meaning. Thus the ideal of freedom in Germany must find a new body if it is to arise anew.

SO MUCH FOR THE HISTORICAL ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM. But every historical fact, be it what it may, is prefigured in the soul as a potentiality of the individual. Only for this reason can the individual reject a tradition or so far share in a new one that it becomes actually his own ; it is just the same with a new creed to which any man is sincerely converted. Now to-day an extraordinary number of Europeans, who might quite well continue to be adherents of it, reject the traditional Western ideal of freedom. How is this ?

The simplest answer and the one which first occurs to the mind is, as usual, the correct one ; hardly any man by nature wishes to be free. Only the commands and the coercion of the community to which he belongs arouse this desire in him and keep it alive. If this pressure ceases then the desire is relaxed. I cannot do better here than quote an extract from an address I gave at the School of Wisdom in Darmstadt in the closing session of 1925, under the title of Law and Freedom (reprinted in *Recovery of Truth*), which deals with man's fundamental dislike for freedom.

'Every child desires to obey ; the disobedient and stubborn child is an artificial product of the incapacity

of his teachers. Only an eminently superior man can endure a life outside the framework of rules imposed by a definite profession. Nearly every man needs a "position" to which he can appeal; hence the grotesque increase of self-consciousness in proportion to title or rank. He desires to be able to act in the name of some authority other than himself, and so not as a free man. Sometimes he wishes to speak in the name of a superior: swelling with this power, the most utter coward personally, alas! likes to play the hero. Sometimes, if he is a poet, he exhibits what he really is and thinks, in the shape of fictitious personages, whereas a really truthful autobiography is hardly to be found. Sometimes he desires, at any cost, to be in the right. This too proves nothing but a firm resolve not to be free—granted the doubtful value of all positive law it is, to the superior man from the point of view of his soul, indifferent whether he has "objective" right on his side or not. Sometimes he is guided by custom and public opinion. We meet with the same phenomenon in the religious sphere. No founder of a religion in the West, as Harnack has noted, has ever dared to speak in his own name; all rely upon an unquestioned authority. Perhaps among all founders of religions there has only been one who was ever wholly in earnest about Self-determination and personal responsibility: the Buddha. But characteristically he saw in life nothing but suffering, and only one way of escape from it: the extinction of individuality. The will to freedom in the sense of personal responsibility is, as all this proves, weak in men. This is true especially in the sphere of politics. That the freedom of the press and freedom of stump-oratory may be honestly desired I do not doubt—but hardly any man desires to be wholly free. Classes recently emancipated, like the proletariat of to-day, forge new chains for themselves without delay by their adhesion to programmes much more hard and fast than any ever laid

down by the traditional guardians of authority, and take such programmes seriously to an extent which by itself proves their lack of inward freedom. The infallible index of inward freedom is a sense of humour ; the man who cannot laugh at what he stands for is only a subordinate. In the same way the first Protestant enthusiasm for freedom soon dried up into petty odds and ends of dogmatic hair-splitting, while the Catholic Church inwardly sure of herself had long been above such trifling. It fares no better with the will to freedom in the sense of creative activity. Not one in a thousand really aspires to it ; it is just the decried mechanical labour demanding only a minimum of initiative which is the ideal of the great majority. And does the average seeker after Truth, the scientific investigator, for instance, really wish to be free ? Assuredly not. If we look at it from the psychological point of view, he seeks above all, final truths, chiefly that he may be able to recognize them as binding authorities. In this respect all theologies, legal systems, occultist and other theories are only so many insurances taken out by cowardice ; in this respect nearly all thinking is properly a flight from freedom : thought seeks to anchor herself to a proof. Cowardice in this sense is in reality a basic historical fact. For this reason personal courage by itself alone is, as shown by experience, enough to carry the day. This is why even very serious faults do not damage a brave man of personal importance so long as he has faith in himself. But the climax of the refusal to be free is marked by the doctrine of grace. This, according to Felix Weltsch's happy expression lays the emphasis on " metaphysical security " in contrast to " metaphysical courage," such as the will to freedom essentially is ; for the concept of freedom has a meaning only so long as something is left undecided, and has still to be decided. For the man who believes in grace all value is already realized ; it is sufficient to consent to it, to let it act

upon one. The man who aspires to a state of grace in this sense, desires nothing more than to be delivered from all seeking, nothing more than finally settled peace, and so the loss of all freedom. He has, psychologically regarded, voted for in the inward status of the child.'

Bondage then corresponds much better than freedom to Man's primordial instincts. And this for other reasons besides those we have just enumerated. In the same lecture I added :

'It is not absolutely necessary to relate events to the personal centre of significance which one incarnates, nor to take responsibility by a personal imparting of significance. In one way or another things "happen," whether a man contributes to them or not, and it is certainly simpler to yield to this natural momentum. And not merely simpler : it needs very much less exertion. Nothing demands greater effort than to concentrate all available forces in oneself and then to radiate them so concentrated in a fresh direction. This is not a metaphysical assertion, but an empirical fact. Nothing, moreover, demands greater courage, for he who desires freedom, *ipso facto*, desires risk. Freedom as a problem of real existence stands and falls with the uncertainty of the issue. Belief in grace indeed, theologically considered, involves the same risk, but consciousness of it is practically done away by the fact that he who declares his belief in grace believes from the very beginning in a wise and infallible divine guidance, and so the actual risk is, for his consciousness, done away by the assumption of security. The truth that freedom is essentially the willingness to take risks is directly proved by an historical example. Freedom consists, as we said, in bestowing a new meaning : consequently when it is directed towards the outer world, it must have its exponent in the

transformation of the latter. Now it may be shown that the bulk of the important transformation of the world in the West is traceable to the teaching of John Calvin. This doctrine, regarded in the abstract, is fantastically self-contradictory. In intention it was a doctrine of Grace in its pure state ; in actual fact it demanded the utmost personal initiative, for it asserted further that election by grace is shown by success. It thus made the will to risk the pivot on which everything turned, even the religious life ; and the historical effect was that among men of all ages those inspired directly or indirectly by Calvin have most forcibly shown their freedom in the sense of earthly becoming. All modern mastery over the earth goes back to the impulse given by Calvin. On the other hand Catholic mankind, whose principle is belief in authority, is essentially not given to world-mastery, and not progressive. That otherwise the definition of freedom as the will to risk implies no prejudice in favour of modern progress is shown by the following fact. The conditions for the man who "renounces" the world so as to be freed from it are just the same as for the man who desires to act upon it. To begin with, the former needs a much greater effort and much more energy in swimming against the natural current of life. Afterwards, here too success depends absolutely on consenting to the uncertainty of the issue. What has to be said more is contained in the Hindu maxim : "Work unceasingly but at every moment renounce the fruits of thy work," in the Hindu doctrine that the man who is set free is beyond all fetters—even those of definite doctrine—in the Hindu practice of representing the goal as essentially uncertain, and of demanding infinite patience (which does not however consist in simply waiting for grace !), to say nothing of the Hindu opinion that liberation presupposes a perfect forsaking of all that is earthly—which is certainly more difficult than any conceivable activity.'

It is unnecessary to insist further. Here we need only hold fast one thing : how little it is to be wondered at, considering the nature of Man, if a group or a people one day renounces a freedom they have hitherto enjoyed.

Our epistemological observations, however brief, also explain implicitly why men who possess freedom, unless they are very outstanding, seldom seem bent upon doing anything but misuse it, and so discrediting the idea of it. If it needs a continuous effort to assert and maintain one's freedom, nothing is easier to understand than Man's instinctive tendency primarily to manifest his free choice in accordance with the law of least effort—for all instinctive being is by nature inert. In practice this means that man is ready to throw his whole energies into fighting obstinately for *the right* to be free, but not into giving direct proof of inward freedom. Now as soon as man fights for *rights*, whatever they be, he is putting his spiritual part at the service of his Gana ; in fact, as has been explained in *Problems of Personal Life*, the ideas of property and right have not their basis in Spirit but in the underworld. This underworld lives its own life, in accordance with its own laws, quite automatically without any effort, unwearyingly, just as the heart is never weary of beating. For this reason the struggle for right to freedom is the least strenuous in which a free will can take part. Here any inferior man is ready without more ado to take upon himself even what are apparently very great exertions ; he is ready because they are not really great, for Gana urges him thereto, and he has only to yield to her urgency. But when the will that is capable of initiative thus puts itself at the service of Gana it is at once stricken with her blindness, for Gana blind in origin contaminates him. Hence the obstinate stubbornness of most of those who are fighting for their rights. Fanatics for their rights would sooner be killed than give in : for Gana death means nothing ; only change of direction threatens her identity. In the last resort those who fight for rights are never

fighting for freedom, but for possession, and from the psychological point of view the essential in legitimate ownership is that it should be withdrawn from others' interference. Here *love* offers the most instructive examples. Beyond all doubt the extraordinary severity of the laws which are to ensure the wife's fidelity, arises essentially from the fact that the German commercial formula 'without prejudice and remaining entirely free' can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to every love which has not become inwardly Philistine. The ordinary citizen, the average man, cannot rise to this uncertainty, the risk demoralizes them. When it is a question of the wife's fidelity other reasons certainly play a part. But in some circles it is an enormity to break an engagement, and in other groups of men the rules which govern concubinage are even stricter than those for marriage : what reason can there be except that the man is afraid of freedom. I purposely speak of the man, for every true woman knows too deeply what love is, to fail to understand its instability, even though she suffers from it. For this reason she 'gets over' an unfortunate love affair, as a general rule, more easily than the man does.

In bringing the problem of property and right into that of freedom, we have traced a fresh co-ordinate for the better understanding of this epoch. What the liberalist epoch called freedom was for the most part the possession of rights and privileges ; it was round these that the battle raged ; personal spiritual aims played a comparatively minor part, the question of inner freedom did not even arise. The same holds good also in most of the professed wars of liberation. Obviously it does not apply to such wars as are undertaken at the cost of great sacrifices to realize an as yet unrealized idea : these latter demand creative imagination which appertains to Spirit alone. It is true, however, of all wars which can be traced back to the defence of property rights. If men realized this, could it ever have occurred to them to pretend that bees, ants, and wasps, which defend their

dwelling against assailants, are fighting for freedom? Even when wild beasts try to escape from their cages it is not from love of freedom; they are used to another sphere of life, that is all. Therefore they nearly all end by becoming used to captivity.

The usual form in which the question of freedom is put is then obviously false. No one dreams of denying that the man endowed with intelligence can always choose between different decisions, and that in this sense he is undetermined; this fact is one of the most important differential characters of the human race. It is not, however, to such freedom of choice that the ideal of freedom refers for the idea and realization of which in life the human race, since it awakened to Spirit, has never ceased to struggle in spite of all set-backs. No man fights hotly for a self-evident datum, not even for freedom of choice when accidental circumstances hinder its normal expression. No more does the ideal of freedom coincide with that of absence of all bonds or of all law. Such an absence is contrary to the order of the Universe; where it becomes possible for a time, it soon ends by ruining him who takes it for a rule of conduct; besides free life and action are in their own way just as strictly regulated by law as any other form of life. The ideal of freedom has to do with something wholly and essentially different: it is the ordering of all the manifestations and contingencies of life in accordance with what is free in Man, free in the essential sense in which every man conscious of his own being spontaneously understands the word. It is an ideal order in which this 'free part' in the last resort determines the totality of what is given. The ideal of freedom, then, is concerned with neither a functional potentiality nor a right, but with the real sovereignty of a definite part of Man's being, a concrete and substantial part, which as distinct from the other parts is what is called free. Order in accordance with this part takes place *by means of* that freedom of choice or will—the exact technical term does not matter here—



which most philosophers wrongly take to be the essence of freedom. And indeed this functional freedom is in this connexion so purely a means that it is immaterial to the core of the problem, whether it is the expression of a genuine autonomy or simply the possibility of reacting in different ways to the same stimuli, in which case it is the stimulus which is decisive. The only condition necessary that this means may act in the sense of the only true freedom is unfixedness in general, that is indeterminacy in the classical meaning of the word. The essence of freedom lies then not in the possibility of free choice or of free action : it is the possibility of *being* free. But this results from the *vital* significance which functional freedom—I mean that of free choice, free determination, etc., in which epistemologists so often see the whole of it—has or may have. This vital significance consists in the fact that the man is capable of laying the accent within himself or outside himself, on one point or another, in one place or another, and that such accentuation is not merely a formal or functional act, but one which is *creative of reality*. According to the position of the accent the Not-Self not merely *appears* different, but *becomes* different. So freedom manifests itself primarily as capacity for creative initiative. In it the emphasis is laid not on the power of acting in different ways whereas the range of reflexes and instinctive actions is fixed, but on the possibility of making positive decisions from an inward indeterminacy, decisions which thenceforward remain incorporate in the world-process as facts and forces.

From this it appears perfectly clear in what sense all amelioration of the world by man is bound up with his freedom : man, as formed by nature, originally possesses no other power of transforming the surrounding world than such as every animal disposes of in its own restricted fashion. It also clearly shows why it depends on man himself whether he becomes deeper or more superficial. But above all it appears perfectly clear to the understanding from what we have said that freedom can be

not only way and means, it may be also goal. We will show in what sense. If we view our knowledge of the many strata and many bearings of our very complex human nature in combination with the two facts that man can lay the accent in himself in one way or another, and that reality according to the position of this accent, not merely appears, but *becomes* different—we shall reach the following conclusion. If man puts the accent on his mineral nature he will become a stone; if he insists on his reptilian being, he will become a serpent or a toad. If he lay stress on his Gana, then in so doing he subjects himself unreservedly to its laws, renounces his freedom, and the law of blind inertia will end by mastering him altogether. In the same way man may have the real centre of his life in his sensibility, his emotional nature or his intellect: in each case the laws proper of the sphere in question will determine him predominantly or ultimately. He may, literally, lose his soul, if in the picturesque languages of the Middle Ages he signs a compact with the devil, he may literally in his lifetime 'give up the ghost' if he surrenders himself wholly to the Not-Self instead of integrating it into himself. If man desires *to become* free and as a result *to be* free, in the essential sense which the intimate desire for freedom alive in every man demands, he must lay all the stress on 'what is free' in himself. Now this 'free part' is in essence purely spiritual. It is this lone Self which in *Solitude* we have already determined so far as the trains of thought allowed. This living spirit, the metaphysical kernel of man's being, is neither understanding, nor reason, nor any particular function whatsoever: it is substance. The intellect belongs wholly and entirely to the sphere of earth, just as animal instinct does; it is one of the means of self-preservation the earth-bound life possesses. Reason *may* express an aspect of Spirit, but is not identical with it. All man's means of knowledge being earth-born, Spirit, which is essentially not of the earth, cannot be 'explained' at all, for all explanation means reduction

to what is known. Spirit *reveals* itself, and this revelation must be accepted and consented to by man without any *a priori* judgment intervening, but on the other hand it will be granted to every man only on condition that he does not barricade himself against it. For every man, without exception, shares in Spirit, and generally to a greater extent than he is conscious of. Only through the fact that the Unconscious communicates with the Spirit, of which the conscious Ego knows nothing, can sudden conversions to Spirit in any form whatsoever be accounted for. But once more we must guard against thinking that Spirit is a function or a talent: Spirit is substance: it is in the true sense of the word what is most substantive in man. That is why it *has* qualities, but *is* not one itself. It is enough to reflect on the traditional image of God in its different derivative forms: God is the original image of Spirit. If then man can become inwardly conscious of God, he can, *a fortiori*, do so of Spirit, which is a datum of his normal consciousness. And in principle he can become conscious of Spirit more easily than he can of any Not-Self, for it is to Spirit that, as subject, he spontaneously refers everything. This does not make Spirit any more 'explicable,' quite the contrary: recognized on the one hand as last resort and on the other as non-rational reality, Spirit reveals itself henceforth as being, in principle, inexplicable and incomprehensible. This disposes of all theologies and philosophies which give one or other definition of Spirit. One can only realize Spirit inwardly and describe such properties of it as can be grasped. One of the most important of these is freedom.

Let us first however turn back to the problem of man's antipathy to freedom. After what has gone before it ought to be clear without any further explanation why man, who in the depths of his being yearns for freedom, with all the other strata of this, wishes to have little or nothing to do with it, and why when once he possesses it he so easily and gladly gives it up. In the first place he has to shake off the yoke of Gana and *tear himself free*

from it—which is a troublesome business. Then he must form an idea of freedom and *desire* it, that the accent of importance in him may be shifted on to it—and this needs an effort. Further, he must *believe in* his freedom, that the idea may influence the whole of his Unconscious, and set going in it the deep-reaching processes of transformation necessary for freedom—and this is still more strenuous and difficult. Lastly, the man who lays the emphasis on his freedom in so doing posits his own non-determination by what exists outside him, which implies full and complete responsibility—and only the very strong man takes responsibility gladly. At the same time it is equally evident why man, by his natural bent, prefers to abuse his freedom rather than use it rightly. The latter he can only do by continual self-exertion and self-control. Freedom is the very negation of detachment and irresponsibility, and inability to resist one's own inclination : the latter implies that free Spirit capitulates to the inertia of Gana.

Contrary to what so many assert and believe, it is thus in no way surprising—here we resume the thread of our historical reflections—that in a general upheaval in which the social strata of the old tradition of culture are losing their importance as exemplars—in great measure because they themselves have really lost it so far as culture and biology are concerned—renunciation of freedom and of self-determination becomes the popular catchword. Where no real self-determination exists, and the right of freedom merely serves to minister to the inclinations of Gana, the nearest way to salvation really lies in an order whose main object is the disciplining of Gana. *The nearest way to salvation, but not the permanent and ultimately decisive one.* All history proves the very opposite, that the ideal of freedom is the one imperishable ideal of man's being ; no combination of historical circumstances has ever weakened it for long, much less uprooted it. As on the death of a French king the cry was "Le roi est mort. Vive le roi !" so the end of the traditional forms of

freedom will only gain a positive significance, when from such death a fresh freedom is born. And only if this new freedom is of a higher kind than the old will the rejuvenation which we experience through a return to Nature usher in a real advance.

**I**F WE CLOSELY EXAMINE THE PRESENT STATE OF THINGS with the attention it demands, the incontestable defects by which the era of liberalism has prepared its own downfall are seen to be fundamentally of the same kind as those of tyrants when compared with the virtues of the genuine leader who has a vocation for leadership. Every ruler who does not use his sovereign power so as to make that supreme freedom of choice, decision, and action which it implies produce *all* the good effects we have a right to expect from it is a bad one. As soon as his sovereign freedom of will becomes his only governing motive and an end in itself, it becomes arbitrary, and leads straight to the reign of caprice ; then its effects must be evil for it no longer works in the right relation to other forces, or works out of relation to them altogether ; every natural force, however, which thus acts out of its right relations has a destructive action. What the tyrant's freedom in the use of his power becomes to him, freedom of thought and liberty to pursue one's own interests had become for the era of liberalism. Freedom to have one's own opinion became for the traditional Western minds at last an end in itself to which they considered themselves entitled to sacrifice everything else. And indeed it was a question just of freedom to have one's own *opinion* not of freedom to utter the truth. Never has there been more deliberate lying than since the Press became a great power. That the same is true *a fortiori* of freedom to pursue one's own interests is so self-evident that it needs no discussion at all. Of both

kinds of freedom what we said before of the real significance of most struggles for the right of freedom holds good : freedom of choice, in the long run, ends by being wholly subservient to the blind Gana.

From these two concrete observations the same general view logically follows which we arrived at in our historical considerations at the beginning of this chapter : that freedom in its proper and deepest meaning is the exact opposite of arbitrary power. Now however we can get a closer grasp of it. What we then called tradition, without further explanation, means, to be exact, *the tradition of a determinate discipline*. Freedom in the only ontologically true sense of the term, and also in the one in which it is understood by every one who strives for freedom, signifies not merely absence of ties : it signifies the subjugation of the not-free in man by ' what is free.' It signifies therefore self-mastery. Not the mastery by force, pursued by all discipline based on Duty with a capital D, which is cousin to the pitiless ' ought ' that the German everlastingly has in his mouth, but mastery by the involuntary influence of ' what is free ' in man over what is not-free or not-absolutely-free ; and so in a certain way mastery by authority as opposed to mastery by force. Now this requires the invasion and occupation of the whole organism of the soul. No impulse, no emotion, no volition, must be able to break free from the perfect cohesion. Hence the apparent paradox that all education for true freedom, that is to say the freedom which all men in the depth of their heart are thinking of when they utter the word, has begun with stricter discipline than has ever been imposed upon those who would not have to act freely later on. The education of a perfect European, in the triple Stoic-Christian-Classical tradition, meant a moulding of the *whole* man, from morals through knowledge and action to behaviour in apparently the most unimportant trifles. Hence the exclusiveness of this education of old ; hence the atmosphere partly monastic, partly of the court, in which the

youth of those who were later to be rulers was passed. If we now consider the three most characteristic expressions history has ever known of possible disciplines, that of the slave as beast of burden, that of the soldier who will have to risk his life in war, and that of the man who desires to become a saint, the meaning of this state of things will become clear. The slave need only obey from fear, and perform in a satisfactory fashion definite routine duties laid down once for all ; ' what is free ' in him is considered of no importance and cannot develop ; here the counter-pole of the forced labour is total want of self-control and inward discipline. Inasmuch as ' what is free ' in the slave did not, by definition, help to determine him, it was not illogical on the part of the men of antiquity to refuse him human dignity. The soldier has not merely to obey, but also to be able to command, himself as well as others ; he has always and at each moment to be capable of overcoming his natural inclinations whether they have to do with inertia, private opinion, or fear of death. This assumes a higher degree of development in ' what is free ' in man than any scribbler knows who contends for his right to his opinion. Still the inner freedom of the soldier is not perfect freedom, for ultimately all he does is subordinate to a commanding power acting from outside. Personal conviction and decision are in principle not ultimate for him. If it is asserted that he obeys of his own free will and not out of fear, that may be true ; it means, however, that the soldier has of his own will given up his ultimate freedom, and that again means as we have seen already manifesting his freedom according to the law of least effort. This is quite enough to explain why military discipline, however severe, is yet for so many men a pure pleasure ; from the ultimate responsibility, the only one which counts metaphysically, the soldier is in principle relieved from the very beginning. The oath of obedience and fidelity takes the place of personal decision. Under these circumstances what can only develop in man, if personal con-

viction and personal decision are the last resort, cannot reach its perfect fulfilment. Hence the inner limitations and narrow-mindedness of even the best type of soldier.—The man who aspires to sainthood has from time immemorial submitted at first to a discipline not less but more severe than that of the soldier. The traditional path to sanctity has been in all ages and among all peoples the path of asceticism. Yet for him, who strives after spiritual perfection, discipline and obedience have never been the last word, however much Christendom may have failed to grasp it: the aim was rather such perfect liberation of 'what is free,' and its enthronement in such full sovereignty, that finally one's own will and one's own inclination could not in the end help subserving the spiritual ideal. In that case the Gana and the empirical Self would not appear as constrained and tamed to an absolute surrender in the interests of 'Duty' imposed from without, but in those of the man's own deepest free nature. This is what is meant by man's will being one with God's: *not the sacrifice of what is personal, but the highest fulfilment of it.* So long as the motive of Duty has any say even the smallest, in the consciousness of him who aspires to the absolute good, he has not yet attained to holiness.

This perfectly free life, which is what all men mean in the depths of their heart, when they assert the ideal of freedom, presupposes therefore the disciplining of everything in man but what is ultimately free.<sup>1</sup> I confine myself here to recalling the train of thought developed in my lecture, *Erfindung und Form*, at the Darmstadt Congress of 1926, devoted to the question of freedom, and reprinted in *The Recovery of Truth* (Jonathan Cape, London). The man of genius, of the particular variety

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find all explanations required by what has just been said in the lectures given at the Congress in Darmstadt, devoted to the subject of freedom: 'Schicksal und Zwang' (Georg Groddeck), 'Verantwortung und Recht' (Comte Alexander Dohna), 'Macht als Bindung' (Comte Albert Apponyi), and 'Disziplin und Autorität' (Wolfgang Muff), which have been published in the *Leuchter* for 1926.



represented by the artist, is almost always not merely undisciplined, but to a great extent refractory to all discipline ; every attempt to bring Pegasus under the yoke has ended disastrously. And yet the spiritual creator is said to be free, to be so indeed above all other men. How is this to be understood ? The world is so made that the creative genius, on his own particular plane, and in his own particular way, is by birth partaker of ' grace,' the same grace which the saint only gains generally after a long course of training. The genius is the man endowed with grace from birth, and may be compared to the saint who was *born* a saint. We know that the ascetic who has attained the object of all asceticism has no further need of mortifications : in exactly the same way the genius is from the very beginning hostile to all asceticism. In another respect, however, the spiritual creator is lower than the saint : in the former it is not the whole man who is the expression of inward freedom. In the creative artist the personality is only too often characterized by special imperfections ; only too often he serves merely as a medium or mouthpiece for Spirit. As an integral being the genius hardly ever *is* what he expresses or accomplishes as a creator. Accordingly his behaviour, to what is not-genius in himself, consists as a general rule in treating it in the way experience shows to be most favourable to the maintenance, intensification and fructification of the genius which is not identical with it, and often barely organically connected. Sometimes this treatment consists in moderating and soothing his not-genius, more often in stimulating it and even in goading it on. In one thing it never consists : in chastening and disciplining it, for the texture of the personality must remain slack for it to serve as mouthpiece to the genius which dwells in it. To balance matters the necessity of disciplined means of expression for ' what is free ' comes to light in all the more pronounced way in another direction. The severity of form which is the distinctive mark of every great work of art is far stricter than that of the strictest

system of morals. Here complete obedience to the laws which govern the art is absolutely imperative ; there is no forgiveness for even the smallest fault or deviation from the right way. And if spontaneously, without premeditation and without effort, the great poet obeys the laws of rhythm and metre, the musician those of harmony and counterpoint, the general and the statesman those of strategy and tactics, this only proves how much it is a matter of course that the part ' of genius,' the autonomous centre, demands perfect mastery of the means of expression, how much it is a matter of course that it should obtain and condition this mastery in proportion to its own strength.

From this point we can see at a glance the whole scope of the problem of spiritual freedom. It is self-evident that the life of Spirit, in its intellectual aspect too, stands and falls with its unconditional freedom. But this does not dispense it from observing the laws of logic, nor from keeping the peculiar laws of the object it is studying, nor above all does it free it from the norms imposed by the substantive character of spiritual reality. This character demands truthfulness to the subject's own being, and so a right co-ordination of knowledge in the system of spirit. All possibility of arbitrary falsification as means to a good end is thereby excluded. I say falsification because the limitations indicated in no way circumscribe the work of *imagination*, but leave it free play. The latter may create at its own sweet will, it may add to the given world as many more worlds as it can conceive. These worlds nevertheless will endure only if they are in accordance with imagination's own laws.

THESE BRIEF OBSERVATIONS ARE ENOUGH INDEED TO dispose of all recent criticism of the idea of freedom itself, as erroneous. They show on the other hand how right it

was when it rejected certain traditional formulations of the idea. Now how is it possible that anything, so profound and intimate as 'what is free' in Man, can be held fast as a permanent force acting in the world of phenomena? The sketch given at the beginning of this chapter has shown us that this is what the great Western tradition actually did. It is possible, thanks to the special power represented by *tradition*.

We have already treated in *Problems of Personal Life* the problem of how Spirit can be handed on : but we can and must add here a few further explanations. A spiritual tradition is never objective knowledge, nor practice which has become mechanical, *but a living continuance of the living impulse which created it*. It is only by dying that this impulse produces the precipitate of a concrete existent 'thing.' Every great religion, so long as its progress is guided by enlightened people, distinguishes clearly between its sacred texts and oral tradition. It is on the latter that it lays the main stress : tradition alone can teach how the text ought to be understood, which in the end is the only thing that matters. Now understanding, as always subjective and personal, can be handed on directly in one way alone. One who personally understands must make another share in his own personal 'understanding' being. It is because this is so that so much profound knowledge is irrevocably lost to mankind, and this in spite of the fact that more texts have been preserved than might theoretically have been expected. Whoever claims that he can extract the original meaning from the text alone, without the help of tradition, is really only reading his own meaning into it ; and it is only if the two minds are specially congenial, or the one has a special gift for entering into the mind of another, that the new meaning in any measure coincides with the old. What a rare exception such coincidence is, the whole history of Spirit shows, whether it concerns Jesus, or Dante, or Goethe, or Nietzsche. What is true of comprehension is even more generally true of being, for com-

prehension too is handed on, if it really is so at all, as a state of being. Here the universally valid law is manifest that everywhere like works upon like, and so matter upon matter, force on force, spirit on spirit, and being upon being. Thus personal contact with a saint sanctifies directly, so far as capacity for it exists in the man influenced. No reading of sacred texts or independent enthusiasm will ever produce this effect, for the man who is not holy himself cannot form a clear and living idea of holiness, and only the clearest idea will spontaneously set going in the Unconscious the transformation which corresponds to it. But even more effective than any idea is direct experience. Hence the eternal validity of the relation of master and disciple.

Now what is true of saintly being is true of all being. The brave man awakens bravery in others, the believer faith, the trusting man trust. Even the disposition of a knave can be handed down: a great knave indeed infallibly awakens knavery in every man, for somewhat of it lives in each one of us, and everything that is living in man would fain realize itself in life. Hence the well-known fatal effect of a bad example. Hence the special power for influence of mediocrity and indolence. In the United States the 'man in the street' became the ideal with lightning speed, and his example has undoubtedly had a stronger influence upon the mass of men than that of Jesus ever had. Thus the danger of the Russian *Proletkult* can never be over-estimated, nor the still greater danger of the soon overdue cult of the pariah in India and the coolie in China. In all these cases *it is not a question* of suggestion. Suggestion works always from without to within, and can therefore get a grasp only on the surface strata of human nature. Moreover, constraining influence makes every man, as soon as its spell is removed, strive unconsciously to emancipate himself from it. On the contrary, in the process described above, whether beneficial or harmful, it is a question of genuine transmission of being, which is accepted freely and gladly, for the

inferior—whether for good or evil—feels that the superior heightens and intensifies his own personal being.

But because everything in this order of facts depends on direct transmission from being to being, which is irreplaceable, it is inevitable that every tradition *should die* as soon as there is any solution of continuity in its evolution. The old Byzantine-Mongol-German Russia is as good as dead to-day ; too many generations have already failed to live its life. In the same way the traditional free European is also dying out at this crisis of history ; very slowly in some countries of Europe, quickly in others, in a few countries even he is practically dead to-day. This is because the free European too is the product of a living tradition. From generation to generation for centuries ' what is free ' in the youth of the free strata of the nation had been able to free itself after the living example of its elders. And it is by this direct experience on the part of ' what is free,' and thus from within outwardly, not conversely, that the other strata of human nature had been disciplined—just as verse flows of its own accord from the inspiration of the poet.

If then all culture and so all tradition has its plane of existence in the soul, so in the domain of soul under the aforesaid conditions the living substance of a spiritual impulse may also be perpetuated in the phenomenal world. On the other hand, when once a tradition is dead it can never be awakened to life again. The accident must then intervene of a rebirth of its being in a body like that of the old one, what is called a Renaissance, in order that the interrupted hereditary process of transmission may begin afresh ; but even then, as I have shown in detail in the essay entitled ' Death and Rebirth ' in my book, *The Art of Life*, it is a case of only an apparent continuation of the old. What I have just said is, however, true only so far as concerns the psychic body which was once the vehicle of a spiritual impulse, and so only as regards the configuration of culture, *Pure Spirit*, however specific in quality, may be received at any time by any

one, independently of time, space and particular character, providing that it meets with personal capacity for insight, and for entering into another Spirit and realizing it in itself by integration. Thus by personal comprehension and an act of creative freedom a spirit which seemed to have vanished from earth for ever may be recalled to it again. Here our observations on freedom are merged in the fundamental problem of *Creative Understanding*, which I need not develop again. Regarding what is needed in this connexion at the crisis through which we are living, I will only recapitulate a part of what I said in 1919 in my manifesto which led to the foundation of the School of Wisdom : *The New Union of Soul and Mind* ; words which will undoubtedly become more effective from decade to decade, until the movement to which they gave the first impulse is completed and accomplished :

‘ We are living at a crisis of history in which wisdom, in the sense of a life which has become knowledge, is the only thing which can save us. Reason has dissolved all that could be dissolved ; the work of Socrates may be considered accomplished. Criticism whether emanating from Luther, from Voltaire, or from Kant has thrown down all the barriers which outwardly narrowed the field of thought’s activity ; it has assured to Spirit for ever the full freedom which belongs to her by right. But in so doing this has ended by laying the axe to the roots of life itself, for it has resulted in everything not comprehensible by the intellect having its existence threatened. Religiosity threatens to disappear, morality and in short everything which formed a direct inward support, a principle of stability to which one could cling. Against this natural declension, the movements of reaction, beginning in many places, but often artificial, have very little power. What use is it to found new religions or revive old ones when belief in any justification for the existence of religion has altogether disappeared ? What use is any

ethical culture when morality in general is held to be born of prejudice? To-day there is only one way of salvation : *criticism itself, carried to its highest pitch must be put at the service of the reconstruction of life as a whole.* The task is to disentangle the *significance* of morality, the *significance* of religion, the *significance* of all that was for life a support the action of which was proved beneficial, but which was condemned by a rudimentary criticism as having no foundation in reason, and this has to be done in the deepest metaphysical sense, not in the superficial sense of those Pragmatists who are content with proved utility as the last resort. This opens up to philosophy a new sphere into which in the West she has not yet penetrated. She must henceforward, relying on all previous critical achievements, established in a perfect sovereignty based on the deepest insight, endeavour to reconstruct the new vital synthesis which alone corresponds to the degree of consciousness already attained by the vanguard of humanity. Philosophy alone is capable to-day of creating a synthesis. It is highly significant that the modern rebirths of earlier forms of life, which are appearing in such numbers in all directions as expressions of despair before the void created by the dissolution of the existing world, correspond for the most part to the earliest and crudest grades of being. This is true of political communism as well as of that particular occultism, which being in reality the grossest superstition, serves as the basis of only too many professedly religious groups of a spiritualist or theosophical complexion which call themselves religions. When man, hard pressed before the void by his intellect, finds he can go no further, he turns, like an animal at bay, most easily away from all considerations of reason. But in reality it is not a case of renouncing the insight gained, but of deepening it so far that it will be capable of coping with and reflecting the totality of life and of building it up again by itself alone. It is a question then of

something higher than Greek and French philosophers ever aimed at: not of making the abstract reason, whose limits Kant had already traced with such marvellous clearness, the sole ruler of life, but of reaching a supreme grade of consciousness at which the totality of life may become conscious of itself as reality and also be understood in its full significance, and of consolidating this significance as the basis of life.'

This is true of freedom even more than of any other aspect of life. For freedom can obviously have its ground only in freedom itself. It is the mainspring of all life of the Spirit and at the same time the only path this life can tread. That is why we are going to try, independently of all tradition, briefly to go through the vital and essential manifestations of freedom, and to show how every man may cherish and cultivate them in his personal life.

THE PRIMORDIAL DISTINCTIVE MARK OF FREEDOM IS that it can originate from no other cause but itself, and in this sense it is *unconditioned*. 'What is free' is nothing else but the fully realized lone Self, with which we had to do in the chapter on Solitude; it is the spiritual substance, which every man, whose consciousness goes so deep, experiences personally as the creative significance of his being and so its last resort. As such 'what is free' cannot help being experienced as *unconditioned*. It does not depend in the smallest degree either on external things or on other individuals or on any collectivity; it need not even obey the commands of God—not even when its inward tribunal recognizes their authority. Even in the most primitive form in which freedom can be manifested, the saying Yes or No to an external stimulus, there is no 'Beyond' outside this strictly personal and sub-



jective centre. Here the same truth holds good that is illustrated in such striking fashion by the Impenitent Thief on the Cross ; even the Saviour of the world could not open the gates of Paradise to him because he himself would not open his heart. In theory indeed a super-human, or rather supra-human, principle—in the sense of a trans-personal and trans-subjective one—might condition the lonely Self from within so that its freedom would be only apparent. As a matter of fact there does exist a Christian doctrine according to which the deepest subject in man would be God. But what would be gained by such a theoretical construction ? If there is no unconditioned freedom, then the supra-human principle is equally responsible for all sin, all falling, all weakness, and all indolence. But above all what is decisive for the consciousness of the reality-quality of all reality is consciousness itself. No one has ever had an experience of himself which revealed to him an inward divinity who set him free from all sin and weakness. Those indeed who in ecstasy or *samadhi* claim to have experienced the ultimate union with God, one and all lay stress on the fact, that in this union their human nature was temporarily in abeyance. But if we are speaking of *Man* and pointing out ways he may take, we are bound to recognize the facts of his normal consciousness as our ultimate data. If we do this, however, there is for the personal man nothing to appeal to beyond the lonely Self. This is responsible in the last resort, and so unconditioned. Those recent theories of non-freedom which are based on the conquests of psycho-analysis are one and all the offspring of wrong-headed and obtuse thinking. It is self-evident that man is, on the empirical plane, bound and conditioned not only from without inwardly, but also from within outwardly ; archetypal images as pre-existent forms of experience, and collective experiences not arising from the conscious Self, determine all empirical existence beforehand. But the lonely Self does not belong in any way to the empirical plane. It bears the same

relation to the empirical self as the spiritual meaning does to the written or spoken words by which it is conveyed. Here, too, the irreducible multiplicity of the strata which make up man's being, and the plurality of its dimensions, constitute the primordial fact from which all thought must start. And the dimension proper to 'what is free' is, so far as existence goes, not affected in the very least, much less rendered doubtful, by any psychological evidence whatsoever.

This unconditioned character of the lonely Self has never been doubted by any human beings who were not estranged from life by intellectual sophistries ; otherwise the mere idea of responsibility could never have been formed. This idea is fundamentally independent of the idea of guilt : guilt for primitive consciousness means the same as cause of what is unwelcome, and the primary ideal of punishment and redemption is accordingly nothing higher than a confusion between an indistinct knowledge of the causal nexus and an equally indistinct perception of the natural law of equilibrium by compensation. But if the question of guilt is put on the plane of the objective connexion of facts in the clearly defined sense of the law of sufficient reason, then we must say : in any question of guilt it is at bottom undecided for ever who or what ultimately bears it, for every causal series is endless ; every motive, every stimulus, every force has another behind it. Only when a *subject*, by its own autonomous personal decision, intervenes in the objective causal nexus do we reach the last resort beyond which it would be unmeaning to inquire further. But obviously such a last resort can only be a free and personal principle which undertakes the final responsibility on its own initiative. This truth being settled we can and must say : *it is the taking of responsibility as such which is ultimately decisive*. From the nature of the question there can be no responsibility but ultimate responsibility : the motives which determine and have determined the subject concerned to take the responsibility upon himself are

irrelevant. The essence of all responsibility is that it expresses the principle of being unconditioned and so of being the last resort. The principle of being unconditioned again can only be represented as a mode of freedom, as scholasticism did with its concept of *causa sui* by which it determined the *haecceitas* of God.

The unconditioned state posited by ultimate responsibility has, like all that appertains to Spirit, its basis in Spirit itself, and so in freedom itself. This means that in its own turn it can neither be fixed nor referred to what is fixed. Thus there is no spiritual good beyond the good will, there is no truth as spiritual value beyond truthfulness, nor love inspired by Spirit which would not be the free gift of self. Every form of bondage and subjugation is contrary to Spirit; he who aspires to bind or subjugate proves by so doing that his final personal resort is not Spirit but Gana. But this indeterminacy which is the mark of being unconditioned and so of being free goes still farther: in order to become and to be free man must *will* his freedom and moreover must *believe* in it; its whole existence depends on the attitude of the personal subject. Similarly being unconditioned stands and falls with the recognition of it: whoever declines final responsibility bears none metaphysically speaking; but in so doing he at the same time renounces his freedom and therewith his nature as man. Hence it is evident *a priori*—as all experience teaches—that the first and surest index of the man who has realized his freedom is the joy with which he takes all responsibility. When the Thora taught that man bears responsibility not only *to* God, but *for* God, she gave what is probably the sublimest definition of what freedom means, that history has ever known. But all myths of redemption in the end utter the same truth: when the Bodhisatva swore that he would not enter into Nirvana till the last soul was saved, when Jesus took upon Himself the guilt of all men, both declared allegiance to the truth that the sacred book of Israel teaches. Don Quixote likewise took upon himself final

responsibility when he proclaimed his ideal in defiance of all given reality. This is the deepest ground of the commandment, which everyone instinctively recognizes, to be true to one's personal conviction as final court of appeal even though it should cost one's life. Conviction means nothing else but pledging one's responsibility for one's personal insight and so for one's personal being. Therefore for the free man there is nothing 'beyond' his own conviction, and any setting aside of it or acting contrary to it is self-betrayal, which is equivalent to moral and spiritual suicide.

The freedom from all conditions which responsibility posits has its outward and visible sign in a man's *bearing*. I have shown in *Recovery of Truth* that it is 'bearing in general' which above all makes the man. Bearing is the result of the labour of forming oneself, but this latter is only another word for *Ethos*: in this sense then it is the *Ethos* that constitutes the difference between man and the animal. The *Ethos* is certainly not the last word in man; but undoubtedly it is the first. In the animal Nature perfects the specific form and order requisite for a given existence; in Man freedom, the child of Spirit, must finish what Nature has only begun and planned. Here we see, perhaps, more plainly than anywhere else how utterly 'what is free' constitutes man's deepest being. Undoubtedly all forms and orders which have governed men have—except in the case of exceptional and therefore abnormal individuals—been the result of a traditional culture not of a personal: but all tradition, as we saw, can in its own turn be traced back to original personal initiative. Now the more a man is complete and integral the more his bearing shows. Primitives who have no bearing simply do not exist; wholly bound by their tradition they are formed through and through by it. No Oriental, or Eastern Asiatic, unless he belongs to a despised and persecuted caste, is ever lacking in dignity and self-control; this is because living inwardly rather than outwardly, they all know what it is that makes the

man and know it as a matter of course. The European who has most bearing is the Spaniard. He is the European formed by the oldest tradition, but beside this he is physiologically the most firmly welded unity of Body-Soul-Spirit. So it is only logical that the Spaniard should be marked by the strongest feeling of being unconditioned, the utmost personalism, and the utmost culture of pride. Of pride as distinct from vanity. Vanity shows that a man's feeling of his own personal value is conditioned by the consideration he receives, that is to say by the views and judgment of others, even if others are represented by a projected part of his own soul. Pride on the contrary is the normal reflection in feeling of genuine dignity of bearing ; of bearing as contrasted with pose. This is why all men who are essentially free are proud.

We shall see later how far this thesis does not contradict the fundamental teaching of Christianity. Here we must not delay to set the negative image beside the positive one of which we have traced the broad outlines, for this will give us another co-ordinate to determine the significance of present-day hostility to freedom. The country least free to-day is North America, I mean the United States. They are less free than Soviet Russia, because in the United States the question of any inward decision is practically never even raised, while the convinced Bolsheviks are, in their own peculiar fashion, undoubtedly free men, and the same is true of those Russians who in spite of the horrors and dangers amidst which they live, remain true to their convictions. The specific American lack of freedom arises from the fact that transatlantic life found its form in an attitude of opposition to European tradition, and so bearing, being unconditioned, and pride, were from the very beginning branded as vices. The place of personal conviction was taken there by the prestige of public opinion, the individual found his final support not in himself, but in the assent of the greatest number, and 'distinctions' were not gained by personal worth, but as a reward for success in the business of the

community. The consequence of this particular tradition is that, at the time I write this, there is not, at any rate among typical Americans over thirty, a single man of real inner dignity of bearing, of independent *morale*, and of personal worth. Everything which ought to be inwardly conditioned bearing is replaced there by adaptation to the wishes of the community. Hence the 'topsy-turviness' of Yankee ideals as compared to those of Europe of old. I have dealt at length with them in my book on this both amazing and instructive country. To exalt normalcy, likemindedness, likeableness, etc., to the rank of qualities which give distinction to an individual, whereas they are the negation of all distinction, obviously means a regular turning upsidedown of all ideals hitherto recognized as valid. It is just for this reason that America in the days of her prosperity had hardly less horror of inward freedom than our own continent had of heretics in the palmy days of the Inquisition.

And this is true not of inward freedom alone: even outward life seems in the United States, in spite of all proclamation of ideals handed down from another age, to be more regulated by the law of custom than among any other Western people. This fact proves conclusively that the hylic, that is to say the earthly man, does not wish to be free; the more a society is democratized—which means the less it recognizes values of a spiritual order of being as determinant—the more it feels the need of hard and fast regulations. Now we have claimed that genuinely primitive folk always have dignity of bearing and are proud, and therefore they generally give the impression of being free, and are hard to degrade into slaves: this is due to the fact that on their own level they are in their proper form. They are so in the same sense as animals are except that a certain restricted and appropriate degree of freedom has played a part in their formation. The democratized Western man, on the contrary, has lost his form: he is no longer determined from within and so far no longer a freeman. He exhibits, on the whole, the

qualities which in the sight of antiquity marked the slave. We have had occasion already to point out how easily objectification makes the man himself into a thing which is just what the Romans defined as being a slave. Now following this train of thought to its conclusion we can learn the meaning of substantial freedom. We have hitherto used the concept 'what is free' to emphasize the substance of being free as distinct from the ordinary functional concept of freedom. But the ultimate opposition is clearly that between the free man and the slave. Freedom is always personal ; it is personal or it does not exist at all. So from the standpoint of the ideal of freedom what primarily matters is not the *right* but the *being* free. If a man is inwardly and really free he will conquer any rights which he lacks. If he *is* in essence a slave no right to freedom will be any good at all to him. This explains the hostility of modern ideologies to freedom. They represent a natural and healthy reaction against the fact of experience that as soon as slaves are 'unfettered' all the spirits of the underworld, the spirits of malice, envy, pettiness, theft, treachery, cowardice, lying, deceit, rage, and delight in violence break loose.

A new era of freedom can then only begin when man turns back again to the ideal of being unconditioned and directs his whole intentions and aspirations to realizing it. In Germany at the present time (1935) the preparations for this conversion are already far advanced. The adherence of the flower of German youth to the heroic ideal means nothing but this. The hero is the primary expression of the free man, the archetype of the man who, as unconditioned spirit, defies the whole world around him. Only the essence of the hero is at present misunderstood by our German youth inasmuch as his image is confused with that of the leader. The hero, as such, is precisely *not* a leader ; he above all men is ultimately lonely. His spirit of sacrifice especially has no primary relation at all to the community : it is the pure gift of himself. If the image of the hero, wherever it is really

seen, appears in a tragic light this is due to the fact that between the specific being of the hero and the demands of the community there exists an original and insoluble contradiction.

**B**UT HOW IS WHAT WE HAVE SPECIFIED IN THE LAST section about freedom to be harmonized with the ideal of the greatest possible openness to the world which we had shown to be the general ideal for all ascending humanity? The hero stands for the primordial ideal of man. What makes man, as distinct from the animal, is bearing and ethos in general. The highest expression of the man of bearing and ethos is the hero. And since our observations so far have related almost throughout to the active mode in life—as was necessary for the sake of clearness, because all freedom is spontaneously associated with activity—we had finally to concentrate our observations, also for the sake of clearness, upon the hero who is the supreme expression of this active aspect. We had however already pointed out that the saint is free in an even higher degree than the hero. If we now repeat what we have said in ‘Suffering’ about possessedness as the path to inward ascension, then we shall succeed without difficulty in transferring the insight we have just gained to the pathic type of free man and so counterbalance the onesidedness latterly evinced. We said in ‘Suffering,’ ‘Two, and only two, creative attitudes are possible for Man in the face of reality: that of possessing and that of being possessed, or more shortly of possessedness.’ From the standpoint of freedom it is obviously all the same thing, because it is only a question of direction of activity whether man’s life is action or passion, conquest or endurance; in both cases it is the same pure personal unconditioned responsibility and initiative which decides. On their original plane certainly the Cross and the Eagle, being opposite



poles of human nature, cannot be brought under a common denominator. Yet, we have shown already that, on a higher plane a synthesis of the two is possible ; now in connection with the problem of freedom we can determine the manner of this synthesis more nearly than was possible in 'Suffering,' and thus advance a step further in the determination and solution of the problem of freedom itself. We have once already made use of the word first employed by S. Friedlander in the sense it is used here : creative indifference. The functional problem of freedom is clearly a problem of pure actuality. Man is always free in the functional sense only on a mathematical line dividing the 'not yet' from the 'no longer.' For before a decision is taken, freedom does not come into play, and when it is taken man is bound by the event. So understood freedom is a state of suspension, a condition of complete non-fixation and so of insecurity. To will freedom then signifies essentially to will risk. Thus it is now determined without any ambiguity that 'what is free' judged as function consists in this : *to be at every moment free for something*. This implies that the vital centre of the perfectly free man must lie exactly at the point of creative indifference, not only between any possible particular decisions, but also midway between the fundamental polarities of life, and so must lie above them.

We thus arrive at the concrete problem which in this period of the general revolt of earth-forces through which we are passing, is more sharply put than perhaps ever before. The most important antitheses and antinomies which disturb men's minds to-day arise indeed from a misunderstanding of the fact we have just established, to wit that man's plane of existence proper is situated *beyond* these polarities and that this beyond lies just in Spirit, whereas men to-day regard Spirit as merely *one* of the poles in question. The polarities current to-day are for the most part pseudo-polarities. I should like to illustrate what has to be said on this point by a particu-

larly striking living example. I shall thus expatiate on what is required somewhat more fully than is suited to the scheme of the book as a whole : I do so that no misunderstanding on this most important point may arise or remain. The most thorough-going and also the most profound theory of the polar character of the world-order is contained in the old Chinese doctrine of Yang and Yin, the creative and receptive elements, which by their interplay gave birth to all the phenomena of the world. As Chinese thought started from the totality of the cosmos (understood as all-encompassing reality), they did not distinguish like ourselves between Nature and Spirit, and so made no clear-cut separation between necessity and freedom. They experienced all events in the form of indissoluble total situations, and so it came to pass that even what was purely spiritual was experienced by them primarily in its operation within the framework of Nature. So the concepts of Yang and Yin, which originally referred to natural polarities and related only to them, were applied to the tension between Spirit and Nature, in which Spirit generally, though not always, was identified with the creative element as what is light and luminous. To-day many Europeans believe that Spirit and Earth bear essentially the same relation to each other as Yang and Yin, and according to the side they take, vote for one or the other principle. The most interesting misunderstanding of this kind is to be found in C. G. Jung. I should like to treat his special case here somewhat more in detail, because I consider him one of the most important living investigators of the widest potentialities of the soul, and to seize the opportunity where his misapprehension, so far as I can judge, has manifested itself most plainly.

In my book *La Révolution Mondiale* I had shown that the significance of the first phase of this upheaval is that of a revolt of the earth-forces. More and more suppressed since the victory of Christianity, the earth-forces had from century to century been heaped up in ever-increasing bulk behind their barriers. They had already several

times broken through to a minor degree and extent, but had always been dammed up again, when the World War gave them the opportunity for an outburst so complete that only two mythical images can do justice to the magnitude of the present catastrophe—those of the Deluge and the Apocalypse. All the great movements of the time are under the banner not of Spirit but of earth. And for the earth there is no freedom. Hence the danger—as set forth in that book—that all the gains of the recent centuries of human history may be buried under the ruins of our world. Only the utmost consciousness of responsibility and the greatest moral courage on the part of the genuine representatives of Spirit can ward off this appalling fate. To this end I suggested in the book the main ideas of which I am recapitulating, that all really free and independent men and women, purely conscious of their own quality and uniqueness yielding to no outward pressure or suggestion, should band themselves together; not as a party, a class, or an organization, or an order secular or monastic, but in the form of an outwardly loose and therefore inwardly all the more coherent community, united by one and the same consciousness of value and responsibility. The task of this very small minority—for a long time it could be only a question of a minority—would by no means consist in opposition. The state of things is not the same to-day as it was at the beginning of the Christian era, when martyrdom for certain ideas was the best service man could render to Spirit. The new expansion of the earth-forces is not in itself by any means an evil, and it is not a case of merely opposing the antithesis to the thesis. We should now have left far behind the abrupt antitheses of the Christian era, if we wish to pursue the supreme end of an integral culture resting on a total revelation, a culture which would combine all the elements of human nature in a new and richer synthesis. But till that time the danger would exist that the earth-forces bursting out with overmastering violence might annihilate the Spirit

which alone could create this synthesis. Therefore *die* is just what the genuine representative of Spirit must *not* do : he should and must *live* and ' hold on,' in that attitude of creative polarization which we have shown in *The Art of Life* to be alone capable of leading to creation instead of to mere evolution. C. G. Jung, in a review of my *Révolution Mondiale*, took exception to the ' list of qualities ' which I drew up for genuine representatives of Spirit ; on almost every point he maintained the exact opposite of what I had asserted. He wrote in the *Basler Nachrichten* of 13 May 1934 :

' These elect souls which delight the author's mind will form an order, or at any rate will be fitted to form an order, only when they (in accordance with the author's list of qualities), are conscious of their *non-freedom*, have recognized their abject *dependence*, and *forgotten their* so-called *uniqueness* ; when they know how to *adapt themselves* to external authority, when they can to a certain extent *endure* to be in a minority, when their consciousness shall have found its natural centre in their own country and race, in their social and political needs and obligations, and when through the presence of God—which strangely enough always coincides with times of great distress—out of the deepest experience of the nothingness of man there arises in them a real need for community.'

Further on Jung writes :

' It almost seems that to-day Earth would have something to teach Heaven, and that therefore *the ethereal spirit would have to learn to obey orders* ' (Italics mine, K.).

Still farther on, he says :

' The West has made the struggle between Earth and Spirit, which was only exceptional, now perpetual, and so is condemned never to find moral peace. The

Chinese believe in the " Spirit of heaviness " : and the dragon which we should like to think was penned in dark caves they see flaming in the heavens like fireworks and dispersing all enchantments of evil spirits. Spirit for them is not order, significance, and all that is good, but it is a fiery and sometimes dangerous power.'

Finally Jung wrote, passing on to my prophecy of a revolution of Spirit which would be the end of the revolt of the earth-forces—and in my belief would lead to a new and higher kind of spirituality :

' Whence then is to come the religious renewal, foretold by Keyserling as inevitable and imminent, if we refuse to admit that our vaunted Spirit, that Spirit which longs to understand everything, which would fain reserve for itself a refuge against everything, and yet feels itself constrained to assume ethical responsibility, can really simply die? Has it not become human Spirit, fallible and limited? It has " need of death " to become new as the myth puts it, and this it cannot have from itself. What does the power of the " earth-forces " signify but that Spirit has once again grown old and feeble because it has grown too humane? '

I have only quoted extracts, but they are enough to show clearly the typical misunderstanding of our time. C. G. Jung, too, although a psychologist, is a pronounced earth-man. Never was he more genuine than when at the session of the School of Wisdom at Darmstadt in the spring of 1927 he conducted the variation ' The earth-conditioned Psyche,' on the general theme of ' Man and Earth.' But he is so completely an earth-man that for him the free Spirit that flying Pegasus makes on him more or less the impression of an air-balloon. This divine afflatus is for him nothing but wind. Therefore he is *bound* to misunderstand the Chinese doctrine, for the Chinese is not in the least an earth-man : his consciousness

is, on the contrary, in a very original fashion the incarnation of man's primary consciousness, harmoniously fitted into the cosmos as creature of Spirit *and* of Earth—only on the plane of a supreme moral and æsthetic culture. The Chinese never asks a very great number of the questions a European does; among them neither the question of liberty nor that of irrational fate, nor that of God. But thanks to his empirically correct position in the scheme of the Universe he never displaces nor falsifies its true relationships. So he has never, as Jung wrongly asserts, seen in the Dragon an amusing firework, nor in Spirit a dangerous principle like that we see in the underworld. If we penetrate through the concepts symbolized by his ideograms to the deepest meaning they aim at, we recognize that the Chinese never posits a polarity Nature-Spirit at all; otherwise Yang could not without any trouble be transformed into Yin and vice-versa, nor could light again and again issue from darkness nor what is light from what is heavy. With perfect correctness the Chinese sees in the male and female, in the active and passive principles *the poles of a natural dynamism*, by means of whose interplay Spirit manifests itself. Any concept of Spirit corresponding to our own China does not possess. As for that of Tao, which approaches it as nearly as a concept born of a cosmocentric and naturistic attitude can do, its plane of existence is situated essentially above both those poles. Tao comprehends and yet penetrates both Yang and Yin, and reveals itself by means of the connection and combined action of both.

If now in Western fashion we differentiate more sharply, we can only admit the truth of Chinese wisdom when rightly understood. The world-significance is manifested by means of the world-alphabet; and only through the medium of pre-existent letters and within the framework of the laws of grammar and syntax can it express itself. Sometimes it is the creative principle, sometimes the receptive, sometimes the male and sometimes the female,

which best reveals Spirit. Jung like most representatives of the earth-forces chooses where there is no choice and decides for the mother principle, which like them all he identifies with the earth-force ; he sees in Spirit the father principle and this he *depreciates*. Now Spirit is in truth neither father nor mother, but—if we insist on opposing it somehow as personified or typified form, to what is given in Nature—it is the *deus ex machina*, the Magician. And the tension which certainly exists between Earth and Spirit is not polar in the same sense as the two foci of an ellipse are. Here we must complete and define what we said in the essay ‘On polarization’ in *The Art of Life*. There I called all tension polarization which has on its factors an intensifying, stimulating and fertilizing effect, and I generally employ the term in this wider sense. Strict polarity, such as exists between positive and negative electricity, is possible only when both poles belong to one and the same plane of reality. Now Spirit and Earth no more belong to the same stratum than do the brain and the intestine, or meaning and expression. If these opposites, which I have purposely selected from the most different spheres, can ‘constellate’ with each other, this is due not to any polar relation between them, but to the fact that in every given living unity they are in correlation with each other. The last resort then in this case is not the polar relation of the cosmic principles to each other, but *the unity of the organism*, in which everything is connected by a relation of reciprocity. Under these conditions, all over-intensifying or over-emphasizing of one component of the organism, of necessity weakens this latter in the long run, and indirectly calls forth the activity of the opposite pole, strengthened by suppression. But here again it is not that one pole excites its opposite pole, but that the threatened unity is seeking to restore itself.

This special inward reciprocity between energies united in the same organism manifests itself most forcibly in Jung’s special department of knowledge, that of the

earth-conditioned psyche. Hence the possibility of his misapprehending the true state of the facts, Spirit *per se* stands in no necessary relation to the Earth. Since we have already demonstrated this truth in many other contexts and in different directions, it will suffice then to conclude our reflexions on this particular point, by giving a short dogmatic answer to the extracts from Jung quoted above. If Spirit is really conscious of itself, then *it is quite impossible* for it to become conscious of its own non-freedom, for *it is* unconditioned. It is quite impossible for it to recognize its own dependence, for no such dependence exists. It cannot without denying itself forget its own uniqueness, for its very essence is uniqueness. It cannot adapt itself to external forces, for it does not live on the same plane as they do. Jung's final demand is particularly amazing in its absurdity, for even on the plane of organic Nature, the greater part of what makes any show of progress owes its existence, as we have already shown in the chapter 'The conflict of generations' of *The Art of Life*, to non-adaptation. Unendurable situations are overcome by the creation and bringing into play of new forces which spring from the innermost autonomy of the organism and from that alone.

As for Jung's assertion that my supposed 'elect souls' can only be taken seriously if they 'somehow endure' being in a minority (instead of accepting it with proud indifference as fate), I would rather not go into it. But it is all the more instructive to discuss Jung's demand that these 'elect' must have their centre of consciousness in their earth. When Spirit has broken-into a man's consciousness so far that it plays the determining part in him, it is for him organically impossible without an illusion, I may say without a hallucination, which creates a physiological prepossession, to find his centre anywhere but in Spirit; for the spiritual consciousness experiences everything earthly originally and directly as outside itself, as non-self which as a matter of fact it is. But Spirit in Man is so free to create that, with a wave of its wand, it



can change evident unreality into reality for itself; and this is what has happened to C. G. Jung. If it had not he could never have written (here I am answering further quotations from his essay), that the ethereal spirit would have to learn to obey. Spirit may forsake the Earth, as God according to Christian belief may forsake man, but it can never learn to obey except by prostituting itself. *A fortiori* Jung could never have written that Spirit had become old and feeble and could have 'need of Death'; *never* does Spirit as such need to die that it may be born again. Finally, Jung's assertion is obviously false when he says that Western man has perpetuated what was as *exceptional* opposition between Spirit and Earth and so is condemned never to find moral peace. The whole immense significance for mankind of the West lies in the fact that it saw the opposition between Spirit and Earth not as something exceptional, but quite correctly as *the fundamental problem of man*. This life is essentially tragic because there is eternal strife between the laws of Spirit and those of Earth. It may have been possible in earlier, less differentiated states of consciousness not to be penetrated by this truth or to set it aside without any lack of truthfulness—at the stage of evolution reached by those who are taking part in actual history the possibility exists no longer.

I HAVE DEALT AT SUCH LENGTH WITH THE MISUNDERSTANDING in connection with the problem of freedom, as typified by C. G. Jung, because from it the true place and meaning of the creative indifference which characterizes 'what is free' could be most clearly grasped. Let us go back to the sentence in which I said that Spirit in man is so free to create that with a wave of its enchanter's wand it can transform even palpable unreality into reality for itself. As opposed to the attempt of my *South American Meditations*

to see blood and earth, as they actually are, in their proper position in the human scheme, Jung starts from a prepossession, and then places knowledge correctly acquired elsewhere, at its service. For him Spirit and Earth *must* stand in a relation of polarity, they *must* correspond to the Chinese symbols Yang and Yin. The mere fact of being able to lay down the law in this fashion assumes the existence of a creative freedom far above all Jung's polarities. But what happens when the Spirit is opposed to earthly reality as its opposite pole? Then Spirit comes down from its own proper region, and does in reality hamper itself with trammels of prejudices which it has itself forged. Then perforce it transforms the state of fact in accordance with its own false image. If Spirit is to be 'something' that can be externalized and set in opposition to the Earth, then there is nothing else to do but to identify it out and out with the Intellect or the Will. If blood and earth is to stand for the core of man's being, then much that as a matter of fact belongs to soul and Spirit must be decreed to belong to blood and earth. But the most serious thing is that in so doing the coherent unity of human nature as it actually exists is arbitrarily torn asunder. Spirit is then declared in Ludwig Klages' monstrous formula as 'the adversary of the soul,' and thanks to such a declaration really becomes inimical to life; understanding and reason are proscribed and so become real dissolvents; the pneumatic man, that is to say the spiritual man, is deemed—in diametrical opposition to the Greek idea—lower than the hylic, i.e. the earthly man, and so really deteriorates. From the standpoint of knowledge all truth is thus turned upside down—so far at least as there is any remains of truth left. Hence the pathological character of the men representative of our time. The Intellectual who disowns all roots in earth and all ties with the not-Self and so rejects all responsibility in the scheme of life as a whole, is the lamentable product of this cleavage. But the pure Chthonic (earth-man) presents a similar spectacle of

decomposition : he is an eliminate of the man originally determined by Spirit, a kind of sediment or dregs. These two opposite products of the dissolution of the integral man, the children of prejudice, are the protagonists in all conflicts which may be designated as sham conflicts, because they owe their origin to questions wrongly put and to incorrect observation. As phenomena they are only too real. To-day Spirit and Not-Spirit, Idea and Blood, Freedom and Dependence, Human and Brute Nature, confront each other like enemies bent on mutual annihilation. Yet since Yang and Yin represent the permanent poles of earthly life, neither of them can vanquish the other. So they harden and atrophy into ever-increasing one-sidedness, and life as wholeness is more and more imperilled. At this point we grasp the whole deep significance of the idea of heresy, of heterodoxy, an idea hardly understood to-day. Spirit is so entirely free that it can not only imagine what it pleases, but it can also view itself as it likes—and so *becomes* different. Its deepest being is indeed not altered by such day-dreaming ; but it gets overlaid with images, and consciousness makes this layer its starting-point supposing it to be reality. In a case of correct representation, the true being as it really is expresses itself through the medium of the image, and is less distorted in proportion as that image corresponds to the law of correlation between meaning and expression. Hence the Christian command to be truthful. Hence likewise the Hindu theory and practice of self-realization, the Way to which consists in right thinking, right willing, right acting, right meditation : the task is to find the way from the self-invented representations to man's own deepest reality. From this point of view we understand better why man seems so much more inclined to deceive himself than to accept himself, and to recognize himself as he really is. Nearly all errors are the offspring of ill-will, that is to say here of Gana which desires to get the upper hand of Spirit with its own uncongenial laws. Evolutionism for instance,

according to which all that is bad and inferior spontaneously develops towards what is good, springs from desire to follow the law of least effort. But the same is true of all the erroneous doctrines which we have here exhibited in their true light.

To come back to polarities, what it concerns us to understand once for all is this ; the exclusive accentuation of one pole of our nature cannot lead to a state of freedom. Neither the exclusively ethical nor the exclusively pathic man is free. For by tying himself exclusively to one pole of man's nature and denying or fighting against the other the man inwardly forsakes that indifference-point, from which alone activity of ' what is free ' is possible, and shifts his centre of consciousness on to what is essentially not-free. Hence the constraint exercised by facts, by abstract calculation, and by the inner law of the organization, over the majority of men of an activist disposition. The man of action has a plane of existence which is not situated above his activity as it should be if he is to remain free : he identifies himself unreservedly with his ethical pole. Whence, conversely, comes the unexampled power of suggestion, the blind faith in catchwords, the growing lack of initiative, the increasing inclination to obey, the yielding as meekly as a lamb to fate ? Whence the glorification of the impersonal irrational of the world-fate in general and on the other hand the belief in miracles ? From a total surrender to the pathic pole. Both kinds of self-surrender make man in the most literal sense not-free. And indeed, so far as the one-sided initiative above described goes, the pure man of action is no more free than the man who is absolutely passive. Only the man who inwardly keeps the mean between the poles of Ethos and Pathos, from a standpoint above the plane of both poles, who holds the balance from the standpoint of his ultimate inward loneliness—only this man can be free.

At this point we can determine the idea of this requisite higher plane as exactly as conceptual thought permits.

The deepest Self in its unconditioned loneliness stands not only beyond all earthly ties, but beyond all earthly polarities. The Self is neither male nor female, it neither begets nor bears, is neither active nor passive, for its only 'activity' consists in free radiation of 'significance.' Since however this deepest self is only the ultimate depths of man, not the totality of his being, it follows that the whole man can live his life to the full only as function of the natural norms and the choice they demand: he must *either* beget or conceive, *either* act or suffer. Only for self-consciousness the accent is laid not on the alternatives as such, but on the significance which life has or may have in one or other of these possible modes. And this significance is in no way subject to the law of polarity; it is unconditioned and absolute. Thus every man, as Self, sits enthroned in the sphere of his Soul above his own polarities; he makes use of them and, if he is deeply enough rooted in the Self, he shines through them and transfigures them. Then the substantial significance creates by its own virtue a new state of facts. All this shows clearly why not only in a nation but *a fortiori* in the soul of the individual, all cleavage between the active and passive poles, by an option in favour of one of them, means the gravest menace to the unity of the personality. The poles must be *balanced* if the man is to preserve a correct equilibrium.

This necessity Oscar A. H. Schmitz, dead so young alas! has worked out in relation to the moral problem with such exemplary clearness in his *Versuch einer polaren Ethik*,<sup>1</sup> that I would rather here merely refer to his book—which already is in danger of being forgotten—than repeat his ideas at length. Let me here say only that Schmitz' great epistemological merit lies—in spite of the title of his essay—in describing Ethos and Pathos not as poles proper, but as necessarily connected and organically correlated inward attitudes and states of mind, nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Versuch einer polaren Ethik*, in 'Brevier für Einsame,' Georg Müller Verlag.

like the mathematical signs plus and minus : and in every concrete case must both exist, and exhibit an equilibrium, if the unity of the living whole is not to be destroyed. Thus the Eagle and the Cross *correspond* to each other. In this way every solution of the ethical problem which results exclusively or predominantly from the plus or minus aspect of life is only a pseudo-solution. What is true in morals is true absolutely for all practical life. In all empirical life Yang and Yin, Ethos and Pathos, Male and Female as plus or minus aspects of life co-operate, and no normal full life of ' what is free ' is conceivable which would not consist of the combined interplay of action and suffering each completing the other ; all one-sided realization destroys the living unity. Here we grasp the ultimate ground of the hostility to freedom shown by our times. Freedom, understood one-sidedly as ethical or activist, has led by counter-currents to an unparalleled enslavement, or else has given birth to an irresistible longing for a sub-human state from which all freedom would be excluded. From this we understand the ever-increasing prejudice in favour of more ancient or foreign solutions of the problem of life—primitive Nordic, Classical, Chinese or Hindu. In one fashion or another each of these solutions stands for a balance of positive and negative. Ancient China contrived to keep this balanced equilibrium both on the largest scale and in the fashion most conformable to good sense ; India did it by in Karma uniting individual with fate in a single vision ; Hellas in the interplay, the duo, of Apollo and Dionysos ; Rome in the union of absolute surrender to the commonweal with a Stoic lordly ethos ; the oldest Nordic world in the fusion of belief in fact with a spirit of adventure for love of the game. We have shown in ' Suffering ' how, in principle, genuine Christianity achieved the balance of Ethos and Pathos better than any other world-view, because it alone laid the accent on freedom. It united pride and humility, surrender to the world and mastery of it, love of one's neighbours and

lust of battle so perfectly that under all circumstances 'what is free' had the last word. Even blind belief raised the Christian into the realm of genuine freedom, for in his case this whole belief was just the expression of 'what is free.' It is none the less true that the Christian cosmos being based on blind belief was bound to be dissolved by the progress of knowledge. And this process of dissolution is irreversible. For this reason creative insight now has to bring about a fresh equilibrium of positive and negative if a new era of freedom is to dawn upon us.

**T**O FIND FIRM FOUNDATIONS FOR CREATING SUCH AN equilibrium we are going to pass in review the virtues decisive for practical life. The first of these virtues is character, in the sense in which we say of a man that he has character. We have seen in 'Truthfulness' that the German puts the question of character in a typically false way, as if it were a crust or some other outer support, or an inward tie to something exterior. We ended by establishing that only a bond acting from within outwards and so something like the skeleton of a vertebrate as contrasted with the shell of a crustacean, constitutes character in the positive sense of the word. In the historical introduction to this chapter we have shown why and how far a hereditary framework can give valuable inner support. But on the other hand a psychic heritage only lives on in so far as it is continually given new life by persons who are its concrete living representatives. It follows that the real problem of character can be stated to have any meaning only from the standpoint of freedom, and the free exercise of it. Every man comes into the world with certain definite natural predispositions, for which he is not responsible, and which he can hardly, if at all, change. It is obviously absurd to require, to command,

and to condemn, where it is a question of natural gifts pure and simple, and where consequently there is no responsibility. Roman jurisprudence takes account of this, when it teaches that 'Motive exonerates, character incriminates.' This teaching has clearly no meaning unless by character is meant what is subject to the law of freedom, and so something different from a natural disposition, and if it does not matter what natural dispositions one has, but only what one has made of them and by means of them. As a matter of fact every man in whom 'what is free' is fully developed—this is the one and only indispensable restriction—is responsible for his own character, for if his will is good he has really the power of making something out of his natural disposition whatever it may be, and developing it positively. Or to put it otherwise : from the standpoint of freedom a man's original dispositions are no more than a more or less unyielding stone for the chisel of the sculptor.

So from the standpoint of freedom and the nature of man, the question of character is stated in a fundamentally different way from that in which it is stated by modern characterology. However valuable the truths this science has elicited about what Klages calls man's central motives, the different types of disposition, and especially about the human underworld, however useful such knowledge may be in helping to eliminate those hopelessly incapable of improvement, to fill subordinate positions for which free men are not created, however important its results may be for education from the point of view of the community—they supply absolutely no material for spiritual judgment and for spiritual progress. For it natural dispositions form the last resort, and the fundamental question of all characterology which lays any claim to spiritual significance, that is to say the question of the character formed by creative Spirit working upon a given material, this science never even asks. This is due, of course, to the representatives of modern characterology alive at present. In the German-speaking world at the



time I am writing, this discipline, to a lamentably great extent, is at the service of a mentality of men like Thersites or slave-dealers. A truly appalling number of characterologists are at the bottom of their hearts malicious, envious, pleased at the misfortunes of others or haters of themselves, and these latter are always the worst at denouncing others—the most interesting examples of this are given in Th. Lessing's book, *Der jüdische Selbsthass* (Jewish self-hatred)—for they exalt themselves in their own esteem by running down others. But even when the instrument of characterology falls into nobler hands, it will never contribute to the solution of the question which alone matters from the standpoint of the free man. It will always remain for this science a 'scandal of reason' as Kant expressed it, that nearly all, if not literally all, that is great on Earth has been the work of what are (in its sense) 'doubtful' characters. Its premisses will never allow it to understand that resistances, and difficulties *within* the soul may spur on 'what is free' exactly as outward obstacles do, and that this fact alone, under all circumstances and at all times, according to Jesus' teaching, handicaps the righteous heavily in comparison with the sinner. The real question of character is stated, and can only be stated, as I have already done in the chapter 'Himalaya' of my *Travel Diary* (written in 1912): it is at bottom unimportant what dispositions a man brings with him into the world; the one and only thing that matters is what he makes of them.

Here, if anywhere, the indispensable requisite is generosity. In the first place generosity towards oneself, and then generosity towards others. I put generosity to oneself first, because the man who is generous to himself is never spiteful towards others. A man must first accept himself exactly as he really is, without excluding or disowning the meanest part of himself. It is only from such an attitude that man has his centre in Spirit and from it can judge accurately both himself and others. But when he is once established in it he is incapable any

more of condemning others, as the 'just' are so ready to do. Thus in connexion with the problem of freedom, the concept of generosity takes on a new aspect, and a deeper significance; *freedom itself signifies generosity, inasmuch as this latter is not possible without it.* Freedom as primordial attribute of Spirit is *ipso facto* the virtue which bestows. By its very essence Spirit radiates. Christianity has taught us concerning Love that it is more blessed to give than to receive; so it may be said generally: only to give is in conformity with free Spirit, or more accurately, to receive is in conformity with it only when generosity expresses itself in such receiving—everyone knows how difficult accepting kindnesses is to most men. Spirit grows by giving instead of becoming less; conversely it grows less and dies away when it is at the service of greed and covetousness. Every impulse of Original Fear and Original Hunger which spirit recognizes and so takes upon itself enslaves it to the inertia of Gana, and inertia and determination by Spirit are mutually exclusive. So true generosity signifies 'being free from oneself.' This last expression becomes perfectly clear in the equation established between it and generosity; often used, it has till now seldom been understood. Only one who in this sense is free from self and therefore generous to self as the mother is generous to the failings of her child, only one who as spiritual substance is really independent of what is not-free in himself manifests this 'freedom from self' on which everything depends. And only when the state of freedom from self is in principle attained—no matter how far the process has advanced—does character in the only sense worthy of man begin to stamp itself on life. This is the true significance of the commands, which at first sight lend themselves to misinterpretation, to love one's neighbour as oneself, to put duty before inclination, to sacrifice one's private interests or opinions.

THE GENEROUS MAN CANNOT HELP BEING 'JUST'; HE alone can really be so. For genuine justice too has its foundation in consciousness of the unique Self, which alone is free and unconditioned, and desires only to radiate good, not to hoard it.

On this point the democratized nations, especially those in whom the racial instinct has grown weak, have much to learn from a past which they think they have left far behind them. I see no better means of expressing what I have to say than reproducing in full what I wrote in 1926 in No. 11 of *Der Weg zur Vollendung* on justice and equity :

'The idea of justice has its natural basis in the universally valid natural laws of compensation. In every self-contained whole, a one-sided motion calls forth the corresponding counter-motion ; all events oscillate about an ideal zero-point, on the fixity of which the equilibrium of the whole depends. Now the law of compensation in itself has to do only with the state of facts, not with values ; therefore at first sight it might appear to have no connection with the postulates of Ethics. But experience teaches that the feeling of justice in primitive man demands nothing more than equilibrium and identity of action and reaction. It is concerned simply with the facts ; it is the action which counts in the crime and not the intention, and punishment here is compensation in a sense hardly different from that of compensation between physical processes. If now we analyse our own feeling of justice, apparently so different and so sublime, we discover that its instinctive postulates of justice are very like those of the negro. Whatever theorists may assert, punishment, we feel, must be simply compensation corresponding to the crime. In the same way our every primitive instinct feels it to be "just" when the man

who is spiritually favoured is badly off in material goods, when the one who is too "white" (holy) is ill-treated by the world of darkness, so that the normal grey-in-grey is not imperilled, and he who is too exalted has to suffer a fall at last. It is for the same reason that the more a man has the more we require of him, the strong must show more consideration for others than the weak; envy is a primordial ineradicable social phenomenon, ineradicable because it is the reflection of the elementary feeling which demands compensation. For the same reason the Hellenes in their single-mindedness thought jealousy no stain on the character of their gods, and saw nothing but "justice" in the fact that it was their most virtuous and eminent citizens who were ostracized.

‘But it is clear that justice so understood in no way coincides with justice in the spiritual sense. How are they related to each other? The way to understanding is pointed out by Nietzsche’s saying that justice is a *positive* attitude. This means: true justice does not at all demand a compromise between the existing states of things on the basis of an equality of rights. On the contrary, far from holding the balance even between the facts, *it takes the side of the value recognized as superior*. It does not primarily demand any compensation. Since, however, the law of compensation (which we see for true justice means the law of compromise in the bad sense of the word) holds good for all facts, the result is the following relation between justice and the demand for compensation: the moral consciousness exacts that the compromise should be in favour of the higher value. This demand often coincides with the natural inclination, for instance, in the infliction of punishment for ordinary crimes; in all complicated cases on the contrary it generally fails to correspond to it. Then the execution of justice demands that one should swim against the current of natural feeling. Then it demands that the man who is called

to arbitrate in each case should have, in spite of all existing standards, the courage to take the side of what he personally has recognized as higher. Here there are no fixed rules—how could there be?—to show what is right in each particular case. Hence many people take it for granted that the judge has to be impartial : now it appears that this *petitio principii* expresses a misunderstanding. *Impartial is just what the judge should not be.* Of course he must not decide on the ground of personal interests of the one or the other party. But it is his duty to decide in favour of what is *just*. And since in a spiritual sense both cannot possibly be equally right, the judge, to settle the difference justly, has, whatever the circumstances, to pronounce a verdict which, from the standpoint of Nature's law of compensation, will be *unjust*.

'Let us look at the problem from another angle. We may then lay down the rule that the law of compensation starts from the supposition that all states of fact have equal rights, justice on the contrary lays down that the better state has a right to favoured treatment. In this we possess the key to one of the most important enigmas of social life, namely, to why epochs, when the dominant ideal is equality are, without exception, when tested by the criterion of value, epochs of injustice. For this is the deepest significance of the fact that the recognition of this ideology inevitably leads to a levelling down. As soon as we start from the equality and equal rights of all men the spiritual ideal of justice is bound to deteriorate by retrograde evolution into the primitive one of mere compensation, and from the standpoint of natural law all difference and superiority are crimes. To this evolution linguistic usage conforms excellently : in times when equality is dominant not justice, but equity is the everywhere valid and everywhere recognized ideal.

'Equity may be understood in two different senses and is generally so understood. First as the basis for

the correction of formal rights according to the spirit of justice. Such correction must evidently be guaranteed everywhere by corresponding provisions to this effect, for there is no positive right which could be put in force under all circumstances without flagrant injustice. The admitted validity of considerations of equity in a verdict, on the plane of the normal justice of life is, relatively to the prevailing standards of justice, the equivalent of reprieve in an extreme case. For there is no general law which would automatically allow each given case to be justly treated, just as there is no statistical law which would admit of the particular case being foreseen. Only, what the majority, in equalitarian times, understand by equity is something wholly different : *it is equality of rights quite independent of value*. To give an extreme instance for the sake of clearness. From the standpoint of equity, a strife of interests between a saint and a sheer rascal is not to be decided, as would be only just, by rendering the rascal harmless in the interests of the saint, but by effecting a compromise between the two, since they both have the same right to live. So understood the demand for equity is obviously the negation of all sense of justice. Where this demand is admitted, all realization of value is excluded, it is impossible to set a premium on what is higher, all formal possibility of taking the side of the better is excluded, and this possibility is the first condition of all order on the basis of true justice.

‘From what has been said it is perfectly plain why the democratic era, which from the point of view of equity is one of the first in dignity, has from that of justice been one of the darkest in all history. Because it has been one of cowardice. Under the reign of justice the man who gives the verdict must have the courage to take a side. Where equity is master, however, the arbitrator has nothing higher to do than to effect a compromise between two sets of facts, independently

of all value. This does not involve any personal risk, for every judgment may be based on purely objective considerations ; it is really impartiality which decides. But equally it is cowardice which decides and so baseness. For this reason cowardice and baseness flourish and are always on the increase in equalitarian epochs, because only a base and cowardly disposition can recognize equity as the final court of appeal, hence naturally they triumph in the struggle for existence.

‘ Viewed from this standpoint the signs heralding a new epoch of violence take on another aspect. Why, during the World War, did conquering Germany fail to enlist sympathy ? Because she thought too much of equity ; under a rough exterior she remained yielding and sentimental. As her exercise of martial rights was in practice much milder than that of the Allies, so she tried when she settled down to the task of reorganization to be fair to all parties ; her Spirit was objective and impersonal. But since “ objects ” as such have no vital significance, so Germany was nowhere taken seriously. On the other hand the consistent partiality of the victorious states inspired respect, because it was founded on courage to take the side of what they honestly, if quite erroneously, judged the better part. Therefore their procedure, however inequitable, appeared for a long time just to world-opinion. The attractive force of Bolshevism and Fascism rests on just the same grounds : the violence of these régimes is likewise the expression of a primary will to value. Thus we are beginning to understand how the shameful Treaty of Versailles, by the reactions it calls forth, may give birth to a better world than existed before the War, and not only promises to do so, but is already in process of bringing it to birth. The ideal basis of all these new movements is the will to value, that is, to justice as distinct from equity.’

If we condense the essence of what has just been said—I repeat that this appeared in an essay written in 1926—to get the quintessence of it, and if we examine it in connexion with the problem of freedom, the result comes to this: the just man bears within himself the scales which we see in the hand of the goddess Justice. But not to hold them even in the sense of compensation, but from his standpoint of creative indifference, to decide freely in accordance with the norms of Spirit, which he as Spirit recognizes. He does not allow himself to be influenced by any outward considerations, much less to be bound by them: the pointer of the balance will show nothing but the relative weights of the spiritual values. Such justice is obviously purely creative. The exercise of it presupposes the highest freedom. For this reason and only so far, was justice from time immemorial, held to be the most excellent attribute of a king, that is of an absolute monarch. This is why justice is considered one of the main attributes of God. It is for the sole reason that it signifies a purely positive attitude as Nietzsche defined it to be. The man who is really just, is never just for the sake of others, he is so from an inward compulsion, it is a function of his sovereign freedom. We can now draw the last co-ordinate necessary to determine the concept of ‘being free from self.’ He who is just judges himself no otherwise than he judges others. But he who is just, in the only true sense of the word, is always generous. He knows nothing of resentment, of pettiness; punishment as such is for him never an end, much less is it revenge. This is why the just king is represented as, in the last resort, magnanimous and gracious, that is as freely granting grace. This is why grace is looked upon as the primordial manifestation of God to man.



LET US NOW PASS ON FROM THE OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS of the free man to what he is for himself. We find then that his primary attribute is his *honour*. The feeling of honour is in fact the primary and decisive subjective exponent of the feeling of being unconditioned, with which freedom of the personality in its relations with others is indissolubly bound up. To be honourable means to be '*integer*,' in the fullest and deepest sense of the Latin word : to be whole in the sense of an unimpaired whole, to be pure as a *virgo intacta*, clear from all spot and stain, actually and quite independently of the judgment of others. And this integrity draws its whole absolute value from its simple existence, from its quality alone. Hence the traditional idea of the Eagle-Man (which dawns instinctively on every man as soon as he feels even confusedly what honour means) : an insult to his honour can only be washed out with blood. This concept has no relation to the idea of vengeance, and still less to the instinctive reaction certain men have, who try at once to do away with whatever affects them unpleasantly—this is the chief motive of most of the murders due to Delicadeza. The duel, on the contrary, is in essence neither murder nor revenge : if it were, the injured party would not take it as a matter of course that he should run the same risk of death as the offender whom he calls out. The idea of injury does not indicate that the injured party is *actually* injured, it indicates that he sees an outrage in the fact that another has dared to *wish* to attack his integrity : such an outrage demands that the offender should measure his whole being against that of the man he has injured. In claiming to obtain satisfaction himself the free man affirms and maintains that he is unconditioned. He freely exposes his wholeness to death, refusing to recognize any judge of his honour except himself. This profound idea of duelling shows clearly on the other hand that a man may equally well

decline to defend his honour : the man who declines a duel also affirms that he is unconditioned, provided that by so doing he gives proof of the same courage as the man who fights. Both consider that they simply *cannot* be injured, each man's honour being his own alone ; both are not defending themselves, they are punishing : one with the sword in his hand, the other with silent contempt. Both recognize equally that an apology is a substitute for punishment : from the point of view of honour indeed an apology signifies a lamentable abandonment of what one had affirmed and consequently, when a man identifies himself with what he affirmed—as he is bound to do if he really did intend to offend—it means a collapse of his identity as total as actual death.

But the claim to be unconditioned embodied in a genuine sense of honour is so exalted that few men can keep it up to the end without some external support. Hence the ideas of the honour of one's rank and class, of one's profession, all external supports of one's personal sense of honour. Hence the necessity for some social foundation for honour : the aggregate of the customs sanctioned by good breeding. But from this point man slides, only too easily, by natural inclination into believing that not only can honour be ' shown ' to him, but it can be ' bestowed ' upon him. In fact, all decline of the sense of honour has, whatever its variant, led to the very opposite of the genuine sense of it, namely, to the primacy of public opinion. This has happened not only in North America, even in Spain there has come a moment when reputation has taken the place of honour as a value. In reality, whatever the prejudices current at the time may be, man's honour is only for himself and derived from himself as an unconditioned individual. The ' honest ' man in the old Germanic sense of the word<sup>1</sup> was the man in whom one was in duty bound to place confidence. The same was true of an honest woman. We see that in these ideas the stress was not laid on the recognition of

<sup>1</sup> ' Ehrlich,' etymologically ' who must be honoured.'

honour by others, but on the fact that the man of honour has the right to *demand* that honour should be shown to him. And the idea that a man can be dishonoured, declared to be robbed of his honour is justified only if it implies that the man himself has, already in his own person, disowned his integrity : the community contents itself with confirming his action.

It is in vindicating this privilege, which is purely personal and not dependent on anyone, that freedom manifests itself in its purest form. What a man demands for himself, what he does or does not permit others to do or say to him, what he exacts from himself, how far he is capable of sacrificing what is outward to the claims of what is inward—all this shows, independently of all endowments or position, how far he is free or not free in the substantial sense of the word. This is why all the free men in history have been, as distinct from slaves, held to be 'honourable,' in the deepest sense of the word, which is : worthy of honour. And it is a fresh sign of the fact that new Germany is on the right road, that she is beginning to profess allegiance again to honour as the mainstay of the great structure of community life. She thinks she can do it from the starting-point of the Socialists. But in reality what is true of the ideal of the hero is just as true of the idea of honour : they both stand for the very opposite of social demands. Just as the hero is the most lonely and most unrelated of men, so the feeling of honour as determining the man is the greatest proof of being unconditioned that can be given by the unique, free, and lonely individual who is his own final court of appeal. To continue this train of thought I cannot do better than reproduce part of an essay which I wrote in the summer of 1927 for the 14th Number of *Der Weg zur Vollendung* under the title *Von der Wahren Selbstachtung* (Of true self-esteem).

'Aristotle taught that equality is the right relation between equals, inequality, on the contrary, the right relation between unequals. As a matter of fact between

those on a plane of inequality under no circumstances is a right relation conceivable which would be one in the sense in which the United States or Switzerland understand equality. *Si duo facient idem, non est idem*. Of course, on the purely objective plane, where the man is not taken into account, there may be a right which is the same for everyone. But never where the personal element is taken into account, however little. The pig's grunt is not the same thing as the lion's roar ; the man who is really a lion has the right to demand that his roar shall be quite differently interpreted from the pig's squeak, for his nature is of a nobler quality. Here the problem of value comes in. Understanding pure and simple is of no use here ; given enough of the necessary intelligence everything that is intelligible can be understood, and on the whole what is base is more easily understood by the majority than what is sublime. As for what is of such a quality and kind that man is tempted to say : " I do not understand," such things are irrational data like the saline quality of salt or the sweetness of honey, which must simply be accepted as what they are. Now on their own plane values also are ultimate data. There are higher levels and lower levels, noble conduct and base conduct. And on this plane in case of conflict, before the tribunal of justice, which is different in quality from that of equity, the absolute right is on the side of the noble against the base, the great against the small. Not obviously in the sense that the lion would have the right to devour the pig without further trial, but in the sense of exacting that the lion's ethos must be considered absolutely superior to the pig's.

There is no equality possible in the democratic sense between men who are inwardly unequal. This is why there is need for every superior man to establish an equation in the given case by degrees of remoteness, which is the only just equation. Goethe wrote once when some merchants in the inn where he was staying had seated themselves at his table, annoying him by their rowdiness,

to mark their equality (I quote from memory) : "It was just by admitting they recognized who I was that they would have shown they were my equals ; by doing as they did they merely showed their vulgarity." The man who grants to a Goethe that he is what he is, will not think for one moment of tapping him on the shoulder. So every noble-souled man, out of respect for himself, will always keep his proper distance from those who are in any sense his superiors. For, as Goethe also said (I am only giving the sense of his words), etiquette establishes the correct equation between the king and the man of low degree ; so it is etiquette alone which creates an equality. Here lies the core of the problem. If a relation of equality is to be established between men essentially unequal, a special equation must be established each time according to the particular case.

To-day, unfortunately, the majority of modern men, being more or less Americanized or Bolshevized, think and feel like the merchants Goethe ridiculed. It is very rare to find a young man who understands the meaning of the old formula : ' To every man his due.' Few and far between, too, are those who understand that when they have unintentionally wounded anyone, their own honour demands that they apologize personally to the person affected, giving him the full satisfaction he has a right to expect. If by our fault another man's personal equilibrium is upset we owe it to our own unconditioned being to re-establish, on our own initiative, the equation between us which has been disturbed. This, as a matter of course, has nothing to do with the fact of being right or wrong objectively : the ideas of right and wrong as commonly understood are derived from the domain of equity, not of justice. What I have just briefly indicated—there is no need to expound it further—should be plain to everybody ; unfortunately it is not so in our days, these are no longer self-evident truths. Most men think and act in accordance with the idea of equity, when it is precisely a question of justice alone.

All this is explained in the end by the fact that an appallingly large number of people to-day have lost all self-respect. Many to whom the ethos of the lion alone is appropriate have a passion—or enthusiasm, it is all the same—for intercourse on an equal footing with individuals whom they know to be hogs. And the only limit which the majority set for themselves is their ‘good right.’ Now formal right, as soon as an inward quality is in question, ought never to be considered. Every superior man is, in principle, just as willing to be proved wrong as right. Obstinacy and a passion for being in the right are sure signs of a low level. The superior man lives on a plane inwardly above the cause he is espousing. Primarily he stands absolutely erect in his loneliness : he does not compare himself to anyone. When a great cause is at stake he goes straight ahead, and keeps on mercilessly to the end, never letting go. On what is trifling he never lingers longer than can be avoided : often he gives in more easily than a smaller man would do. He never wastes his time on pettifogging disputes. It is regard for his personal dignity which dictates the attitude just described. So everything by which the man of ‘the latest pattern’ tries to prove his self-respect, proves on the contrary that he is devoid of it : whether he treats as equals men who are inwardly his superiors, whether he declines to have his “right” infringed, or whether he refuses to make reparation. What is commonly held to be democratic pride is nothing in reality but the mark of an inferiority complex. One is justified in diagnosing this complex on a far wider scale than Alfred Adler admits : the whole wide realm of democracy’s equalitarian demands is traceable to it.

When and how does a man prove his self-respect ? When and as far as he affirms his true and truthful being. This by itself shows that self-respect and genuine modesty are one and the same thing. Genuine modesty is being content with what one really is ; with one’s own greatness or littleness as the case may be. Christ could say :

'I am the Truth, the Life and the Light'; a 'small man,' on the contrary, shows his self-respect by kissing the feet of one greater than himself. The essential point is that true self-respect rests on the fact that the man, as being, does not compare himself with anyone. He estimates himself at his proper value in the absolute sense. He is modest out of *self-respect*, not to please others. If he apologizes he does so for his own sake, not for the sake of others. If he bows before one greater than himself he likewise requires an inferior to keep his distance, still out of self-respect. In short, the man's self-consciousness must be the reflexion of his being. Wherever it does not reflect this being *as a matter of course* it is always a sign of inferiority, because it implies either self-deception or untruthfulness, whether the man affects modesty or exaggerates his own value. He who does not know, *as a matter of course*, what he owes to himself, and act in accordance with it unerringly, is not a free man. When anything that is inward is at stake no free man recognizes any authority above himself.

Can the man, then, whose self-consciousness is primarily a consciousness of his own uniqueness, ever adopt a correct position with regard to others? He alone can do so. He alone does so. For since he sees himself in his true light, he likewise sees his true relation to the totality of the Universe, and so recognizes the same right in everyone else as he does in himself. This is the vital point: *only he, who respects the fact that he is unconditioned himself, recognizes that others are unconditioned likewise.* Only he is incapable of seeing in others mere things, mere material, mere subordinates; only he sees *the man* in men, whether in the Christian or the knightly sense. It is not democracy's subordination of the individual to the mass which leads to the recognition of the human dignity of all men, but on the contrary personal consciousness of being unconditioned, and that alone. For quite involuntarily and spontaneously every man who is unconditioned recognizes in others the dignity of human

beings, and judges them exactly as he would judge himself.''

**F**ROM THE POINT WE HAVE NOW REACHED LET US CAST our glance backward over all we have observed—from many angles and on many different levels—in connexion with the problem of freedom. What is bound to strike us first and foremost is, the downright perversity with which all thought, since the triumph of Christianity, has stated the problem of freedom. Even if she has stated it as a problem of a state of being, as distinct from freedom in the sense of function, she has laid the emphasis on guilt or innocence or else on the rights which ensure freedom—never on what constitutes the essence of the free man, the fact that he is unconditioned. This was due to belief in an omnipotent Creator, whom man might indeed 'forsake,' but from whom he could not escape, and whom it was therefore important to propitiate. This security at first ensured by obedience to the rites and commands of the Church, was so later on by rights duly acquired. In the language of the Unconscious, modern democracy's 'rights of man' correspond to exactly the same craving for security as the obedience of the faithful. The only difference is that the Old Testament idea of a contract between God and Man gets the upper hand of the purely Christian idea of a relation founded upon Love and Grace. In Europe the unconditionally free man, as the determining type, died out with the Mediterranean pagan on the one hand, and the Nordic on the other. Thus later philosophy was able to delude itself it was performing an essential service in examining from the critical angle if, and in what sense, there existed in the absolute anything which corresponded to the conception of freedom constructed by abstract thought. For life this question is of no importance whatever. Take any



definition you like of the potentialities on the plane of facts which are peculiar to man and on the realization of which his higher development depends ; it alters nothing in the reality which alone matters. Or to put it otherwise, nothing ' follows ' practically from either decision. It may be shown with the utmost clearness that no such thing as freedom exists—the only thing in it which is of interest to man will still continue to exist. That is why some civilizations, even very advanced ones, have never put the question of freedom in the sense the modern Western man puts it : among them the Chinese and also the Greek. Pre-Christian civilization distinguished quite correctly between free men and slaves, but never between liberty of the will and liberty of action, and such irrelevancies.

It is none the less true that on this point also the impulse given by Christianity has called forth an unconditioned advance : by raising to the dignity of a problem what was before a mere state of facts accepted without discussion (man was either free or not, he had no choice in the matter), and so loosening all hard and fast fixations. The condition of free man and slave as constituting ' classes ' had to cease to exist, that ' what is free ' might manifest itself as free wherever it was present ; and that conversely every man who was inwardly a slave might outwardly order and undergo his life accordingly. In this sense it may be said that it is the abolition of slavery which after a lapse of nearly two thousand years has rendered possible the enslavement of modern man—who has lost his inner dignity—by machinery and statistics. The question of freedom, and of the measure and extent of it, had to be asked for once seriously, if all the creative initiative dormant in man was to become fully aware of itself. Seen in this light, the unparalleled domination which the man of the Christian tradition exercises over the world, rests on the fact that he alone of all men has clearly and definitely acknowledged his freedom. However correctly, from the point of view of sense, man was

fitted into his groove in the system whose limits are defined, as nearly as may be, by the words Providence, freedom, and necessity, he could not, so long as he was fixed in it, free himself from a condition left behind to-day. And this is true inwardly as well as outwardly. It is an error of judgment to contrast our external dominion over the world with Oriental inwardness. Certainly the Oriental sage embodies a more developed state of the inwardness than Western man does at present. But for centuries now he has been unable to get beyond the stage long ago attained: moreover, those Asiatics who still attain this height are becoming more and more rare. The state which was the aim of the traditional Yoga can only be left behind by the man in whom the Christian impulse is active. So to-day it is still the Christians in whose hands the future lies. All these rich possibilities are the result of transforming into a problem what was formerly accepted without discussion as crude fact. This transformation has, in itself, been such an advance that, in comparison with the progress so attained, the provisional character of the solutions hitherto attempted is as dust in the balance.

When it is a question of measuring a fresh step in the cosmic process of the break-in of Spirit, it is more appropriate to think in geological eras than to trouble too much about the inadequacies of such and such a decade or century. This is all the more true because the era devoted entirely to preparing for a higher state—like the tuning-up of instruments before a performance—may be considered as already closed. Man is no longer afraid of Hell; his belief in an arbitrary God, to whom he must behave as he would to a tyrant who fortunately has weaknesses of his own, has ceased to be a factor in history. The prejudice that Epistemology could take the place of Ontology and Cosmology has no longer any determining influence, so much so that even the period of 'flight to theory' may also be considered as gone by. So, too, the time in which 'rights to liberty' were regarded as the

essential is already over. In this connexion this is the meaning of the death agony of the democratic ideal. And since man's sense of the tragedy of life and his consciousness of Destiny are beginning to counter-balance his exaggerated belief in activism, the latter is gradually gaining in the depth which it has hitherto lacked.

We have, in what has gone before, treated in succession the basic aspects of the problem of freedom as rightly stated and understood. All but one : that indicated by the adjective 'creative' as designating one of the attributes of freedom. Now creative action is so evidently the highest expression of freedom understood as a state of being that it is unnecessary to dwell on it ; we have, besides, spoken of it in *Problems of Personal Life*. And yet we must proceed to define this very point as closely as possible, for it is just here that only too many prejudices intervene and block the way to the deeper insight which alone ultimately matters, because on it alone depends the fulfilment of personal life. We have shown already that the true place of freedom is beyond Yang and Yin. The enantiodromy (that is the tendency of any movement to transform itself into its opposite), resulting from the fact that every earthly event is under the sign of one of those principles, explains the paradox, that the people generally considered the most free have personally only the feeling of interior obligation, creative Spirit being unable to help expressing outwardly what is coming to birth in it. In the same way the religious man whose life is the expression of 'the glorious liberty of the children of God' feels himself merely the organ employed by a superior being to execute his designs. But freedom has its dwelling-place also beyond the realm in which any question arises about the mutual relations between Will and Destiny. It is something ultimate and absolute—or else it does not exist at all. And on the plane on which these two powers act there is nothing absolute. How in spite of this can the indifference of freedom be creative? *It is creative inasmuch as both through the creative principle and the receptive,*

*both in possessing and being possessed, a deeper element is manifested which is capable of magic.*

I say magic because the meaning of this word, as generally accepted and understood by everybody, comes nearest to the peculiar significance of that creative principle which is the final characteristic of freedom. This creative power is in quality identical with that of God. Man has attributed it to the Deity by a kind of projection: he has transferred it to that Being which his imagination pictured as existing above himself. It is a purely spiritual power: it is not fettered nor bound up by natural necessity with anything earthly. For this very reason it cannot be grasped as fact: being pure significance, it has no existence on the plane of facts. But it can embody itself in all facts and by its own virtue can create new ones in the world of phenomena. As pure principle of actuality, by which I mean what is 'here' as well as what is 'now,' always potentially present, this creative power cannot be held fast and stabilized either in space or time. Considered empirically it *is not*. And yet all that is essential and decisive in life can be traced back to it.

Let us go back to what we have explained in 'Solitude' about the unrivalled power of the lonely Self. The Self is just 'what is free': we described it simply in the expression where it is raised to its highest power. Not every Self is a world-force, and not every man is so capable of magic that his action is really magical. To a certain extent, however, and in varying degrees, every man inspired by Spirit has magical power at his disposal. And the more a man learns to exercise this power the more free he feels, the more rich and full and charged with meaning he feels his life to be. Now this magic power, of all Man's powers the sublimest and most pregnant with promise of happiness, can be intensified and heightened, thanks to the same mechanism by which man can of his own free will decide in favour of either freedom or slavery. Every function on which the accent

of importance is laid is straightway vitalized ; it grows greater or stronger or is raised to a higher power, up to the limit at which it becomes the dominant force of the man's whole being. In this sense it is possible for the man to seek and find his centre in this ultimate creative principle which lives in the depths of his being, lying far beyond all earthly polarities.

The significance of this state of things will be clear if we consider its opposite, the state of subjection. Dostoevski said somewhere : man is the one animal that can get accustomed to absolutely anything. It is certain anyhow that the processes of life tend, by the natural momentum of all evolution, to become stereotyped by repetition : so that inertia finally brings about, as a matter of course, what freedom found it so difficult to accomplish. To put it otherwise, it is a natural fate that every spiritual impulse should end by being assimilated by Gana and made subservient to its laws, until what is free is finally completely covered by the overgrowth of what is inert. Now most men are wont to use the expression 'one gets used to anything' in the sense of a positive judgment : in so saying they are doing nothing less than disowning their dignity as men. What distinguishes human from animal nature is the fact that it is, in the last resort, determined by Spirit. Now Spirit is the negation of all inertia. From its point of view inertia is the one unpardonable sin, because inertia in its turn is the negation of Spirit. There are no good habits, because from the standpoint of free spirit all habits are bad. If Spirit alone determined man, no habit would be so much as tolerated. For with every formation of a habit man's original freedom congeals into bondage to Gana. All fixation by Gana is equivalent to a victory of routine over initiative, and so of inertia over creativity.

It is in this way that, if not all at any rate nearly all, the creative force of Spirit on Earth has congealed into Ganic-fixation, and so nearly always lost its creative character. The most fiery breath of original religiosity

has soon died down, and its lava has petrified into lifeless dogmatism and practice. Nearly always the motive power of thought and action has become so mechanical as to be merely the routine running of machinery. Nearly always earthly love, unless it is unhappy, degenerates into nothing more than a habit of gratifying desire. Nearly always the high tide of enthusiasm, when it ebbs, leaves only stagnant pools, just a little higher up than those left by the tide before. Hitherto the moment has always come when the weight of Earth has effaced the traces of what Spirit had written on it. In most cases the process is carried out with appalling rapidity, because most men see an advantage in declension, just as a dreamless sleep is generally preferred to wakefulness, and insomnia (let us think of the words of Jesus : ' Watch and pray ! ' ) is generally considered the greatest of evils. I myself have seen enough examples of such degeneration to allow me to generalize. Show me the young wives who do not plume themselves after the lapse of only a few months on having lost all their illusions, who do not think they have found the only correct attitude to life in a contemptuous irony. Show me the ardent youths of yesterday, who do not to-day smile at their own idealism, and see the alpha and omega of wisdom in a cowardly yielding to the powers that be—thinking to make a show of independence when they declare they do not really believe in the excellence of such powers, which gives them the right to exploit them without scruple. It needs an effort to live from one's inward freedom, and there is nothing Gana, in her inertia, dreads so much as effort. Deserters from Spirit, on the contrary, she welcomes with open arms ; for them she makes everything smooth.

With the man who really sees in the gratification of Gana the end of his life, because a nobler end is beyond his power, it is useless to reason. But whoever aims higher *knows* in the depths of his heart that the goal of human life lies in the diametrically opposite direction. To overcome all *inertia* and so *all* habits, to see that Spirit

conquers and penetrates everything which belongs to Gana, that the law of Spirit is sovereign alone, and so to base one's whole life on freedom—that is the goal. That is the deepest meaning of all, I say absolutely all, higher religions. The object of all these higher religions is to create the man who is free. Only, with the solitary exception of the Hindu religion, they have all so far defined freedom as the opposite of what the word means for most men ; thus they have created an opposition between the Divine Will and man's self-determination. Certainly there is one question which will never be settled : is the deepest Self—which all those who have had experience of it have declared to be essentially transpersonal—is it an objectively autonomous principle or, on the contrary, does it fall within the system of a higher unity which it shares, or contain or express this unity ? To put it most forcibly ; is God the deepest subject in a man's personality, so deep that he is beyond even his ultimate personal loneliness, or on the contrary is there between man and God a gulf which yawns for ever ? Men who have attained an equal depth of religious experience have been found to defend each of these conceptions. But it is a mistake which every religious tradition up to the present time has committed, to lay any emphasis whatsoever on this question : it is practically *indifferent* whether it is answered in one way or another. It is this mistake and this mistake alone which accounts for 'the Godlessness' from which our time is suffering, its impiety which, not content with spreading wider and wider, is going deeper and deeper. From the standpoint of the concrete aim which every man who aspires to rise recognizes as his own, even the theoretical question of knowing whether God exists or not could have no decisive importance ; still less the question of knowing whether man, in the last analysis, is a being who determines himself or is determined ; such questions are perfectly idle. What is decisive is the *fact* that the essential mainspring of all inward growth is *always, under all*

*circumstances*, constituted by the creative loneliness of the individual. Whether a man opens himself wholly to the influence of the God in whom he believes, or whether he personally takes the final responsibility for his acts, the significance of it is *exactly the same* with this one difference : in the latter case freedom is manifested by means of the positive pole of life, in the former by the negative pole. The chapter entitled 'The ultimate meaning of freedom,' which appears in *The Recovery of Truth*, sets out with precision how from the organic connexion with each other in which the different centres in man stand, there necessarily results : first an indissoluble correlation between the realities designated by the terms 'necessity,' 'freedom,' 'grace' ; secondly, the severity of the natural law which wills that over-accentuation of any one of these realities at the expense of the rest, inevitably constellates one of the realities injured. The reader will find a detailed exposition of it by referring to *The Recovery of Truth*. What matters to us here is this alone : the unconditioned personality of the lonely Self remains under all circumstances the man's last resort. As a matter of fact none of the higher religions has ever taught anything else, whatever mistakes the somewhat intricate language of theology may have caused. When the people of Israel, for instance, understood justice only as 'the law,' this conception is really enriched and deepened by the idea that man is not only responsible in the sight of God, but also responsible *on behalf of* God, and by the doctrine that the world was created to allow man free choice. Similarly all doctrines of predestination find their corrective in the idea that man must in some way 'stand the test,' and consistently show himself worthy of grace, an idea which presupposes a much higher degree of personal responsibility than is implied in any less harsh doctrine. Where dogma demands faith alone, deeming that faith is sufficient absolution for everything, then doubt is regarded as sin ; now sin is the final expression of error, and there is no error without ultimate responsibility.



Now if we think of the manifold strata which constitute man's nature we shall draw the conclusion : it is certain that, below the level of spirituality, man is not free and therefore not responsible. As a spiritual being, on the contrary, he is potentially responsible absolutely. He can never then become free nor fulfil his destiny as a man until, in the last resort, he accepts full responsibility for everything of inward concern, until consequently he makes up his mind without any exceptions or reservations for his own freedom.

By understanding and recognizing this truth man deliberately sacrifices the last of the assurances demanded by Original Fear, the final security. Only he who sacrifices this final security, who proclaims himself all along the line the champion of Original Courage understood as willingness to take risks, only he can hope entirely to liberate what is free in himself. Now there is only one road to such liberation which is suited to all men : to open oneself to all the demands of life and to do it in the spirit of openness to the whole world, whether in the attitude of the hero who waits for any danger, his feet firmly planted and his vizor raised, or in the attitude of the man who desires to be transformed by a complete experience unreservedly accepted of all that affects him. This then is the road on which man never ceases to hazard his life in new experiments, on which in principle he renounces all his habits, all security, it is the road of *spiritual adventure*—and again I understand the word spiritual in the sense in which it relates to the life of the soul as well as to that in which it has to do with Spirit. Of course it is a question here of something different from the passive resignation which says 'Yes' to whatever happens, and to which so many men are predisposed. Resignation of this kind means that one leaves the responsibility to others or to chance, and so declines it : its motto is 'remaining free and without any responsibility on our part.' It is a resignation which sets nobody free. The only thing which makes man really advance is the

risk which demands *moral courage*. Man must risk then and *not* leave free play to God or Fate or Chance, but take upon himself absolutely all responsibility, not merely for what he does, but still more for what happens in consequence. Everything depends on this gesture of the subject by which he claims plenary responsibility : the objective state of affairs does not come into the question in the very least, for in the domain in which liberty is possible what is subjective is the final court of appeal. When we reach this point we are in a position to unmask—just as a little while ago we revealed the real meaning, by no means creditable, of a certain passivity which fancies itself profound—the real nature of those who profess to struggle for freedom of Spirit. What they call struggling is denouncing—from a safe position, of course—non-liberal systems of government, and running down those who hold on in difficult circumstances instead of running away as quickly as possible, as they themselves have done. In the first place the man who, running no risks, gains cheap successes by flattering public opinion never gives proof of inward freedom : he is only the counsel, not himself party to the suit, for certain rights—and every right, as a ‘fixation,’ is the creation not of Spirit but of Original Fear. But, secondly and chiefly : since the reign of freedom means the reign of what is free, and this asserts itself only by ‘holding out’ against forces which are not free either in man or outside him—whoever runs away, asserts not that he is a free man, but that he is a slave. For freedom being herself nothing but risk, and living only by and in risks, whoever in the day of battle retires behind the ranks, *ipso facto*, denies Spirit. Man’s freedom shows itself only in a perpetual fight for freedom ; never and nowhere does freedom exist as a static condition. What differs from age to age is only the battle-formation adopted and the configuration of the ground selected for the onset to take place. If there are any men of whom it may be said that they have fought for freedom, it is those whom the Church

has martyred without succeeding in making them abjure their freedom of thought. And yet if we can say to-day that they have fought the good fight, this is not on account of the objective aim they were pursuing, but much rather because they were animated by the same spirit as the Christian martyrs who asserted their dogmatic belief against the free-thinking scepticism of the pagans. To-day, in the age of the great Revolt of the earth-forces, the battle-ground, and the order of battle are no longer the same as in the eighteenth century : to-day the only man who asserts his freedom is he who holds out as a free man in the face of the collectivist and mechanist *fatum*, who declines to 'run away,' but who also declines to die for any special idea—no particular dogmatic truth is at stake this time—who knows how to *live* like a free man in spite of all chains, all pressure, all gags, with which people try to shackle, suppress and stifle him, who by the life he lives not only affirms the substantiality of his Spirit, but also proves it. It is no question here of anything abstract but of this : the era of concretism, which opened with the naturalist concretism and to-day determines the world in the two forms of mechanical naturalism (inspired by inorganic nature), and biological naturalism (ideas of the primacy of race, blood, native country), will only end in spiritual concretism when Spirit, too, has proved anew its concrete existence, as it proved it at the beginning of our era. It is, then, the *martyr* alone, in the original sense of this word which means 'witness,' who counts to-day as the champion of freedom. And the polar character of every manifestation of life implies that this time it will not be the man who acts but the man who suffers, not the man who bawls his truth aloud, but he who radiates it in silence, who will, in the long run, in a changed world, restore the primacy of freedom. The voice of silence, if one may say so, carries infinitely farther than the loudest shouting. Honour then to those who hold out, whether they be noticed or not. Honour to those who do not conform to what they

cannot approve, but on the other hand have the strength to maintain, between the lonely Spirit and the herd-mass, that tension which must last until the final victory of Spirit.

It is a truth which is valid in every sense : in a given subject everything depends on the intrinsic significance of his gesture. If he who desires to show that he is set free would not have any right to run away, no matter what danger he ran by holding on, he is equally forbidden, if he aspires to an ever more complete liberation advancing from step to step, to rid himself of anything, no matter what, by putting it on to the shoulders of another, no matter whom : Leader, Fate, Chance, natural Necessity, or God. He must take upon himself beforehand all the consequences of everything in which he has a share. He must feel himself ultimately responsible to no one, not even to God, but to himself alone. Every time he shifts the responsibility for what he does on to the shoulders of Providence, by so getting rid of it he is yielding to a base trick of his own cowardice. Every expression like 'of course, that ought not to be,' signifies a renunciation which is equivalent to suicide. Undoubtedly there does exist a reality of which the most neutral, and at the same time most exact, expression, is the term cosmic determination. By this must not be understood natural fate, within which evidently there exists for man no possibility of determining himself—in it man figures only as a cog in an immense machine from which he cannot free himself—by it must be understood, on the contrary, that even the individual, unique and alone, forms part, in the dimension of the trans-subjective and trans-personal, of a great Whole. Now it is just in his character as a man free and alone, who decides in the last resort, that man belongs to this great Whole. And the personal significance of every external event, even when cosmically determined, lies in the manner in which man personally welcomes and accepts it. If it were otherwise we should not have seen schemes

of salvation, professedly divine, fail lamentably one after another by man's fault. *It is then nothing less than sacrilege when man, under any circumstance whatsoever, pretends to be directed by Providence.* Never has Providence settled beforehand how man is to receive and make use of what is given him, or what happens to him, and it is this alone that is concerned when it is a question of the significance of events. So the primeval wisdom of the East says : ' Everything is in the hands of God save the fear of God.' As for the relation of the individual to what happens objectively, there is down to the present day only one theory which is relatively probable : the Hindu doctrine of Karma. According to this doctrine fate has never uttered any decree against a man which was not in accordance with his deepest lone Self. Not, however, in the sense that good or ill fortune as such would have any metaphysical significance, but in the sense that every moral attitude and every act inevitably sets going certain *empirical* effects. Whether these effects signify punishment, redemption, trial, inhibition, or, on the contrary, increase, only the Self alone decides, by the position it freely takes up with regard to them. It is in this sense equally that there never has been a Leader sent by God in any domain whatsoever, and there never will be. A saviour may occupy the highest rank in the sphere of metaphysical realities—all his historical importance depends none the less on the way in which he freely makes his potentialities take effect on earth, and just as much on the attitude of soul and Spirit and the practical attitude other men freely take up with regard to him. History is *the* plane of Becoming on which man alone is responsible. Here neither natural laws nor spiritual norms are acting : here everything depends on men's autonomous decision, on their comprehension, on their choice, on their power of decision both when they obey and when they command. Those who are still in doubt as to this fact have only to meditate on the course of all history : *without a single exception* all the great and

good initiatives suggested down to this day by the great spiritual figures, have been pitiable failures through the fault of successors who were not up to their task.

But how is it possible to make what is free in oneself so entirely one's centre? Such fixing of the centre is possible just because it appears *impossible* when judged within the frame-work of the categories of space, time, and causality. For the possibility of it exists at each instant, yet without existing in time; it consists in the breaking-in of a new significance into every causal series, without, however, starting from any given causal series. To be free is, in its deepest meaning, to have an unfixed attitude moving freely in reference to absolutely everything that life is, that it brings and that constitutes it. An attitude of absolute creative indifference, which consists on the one hand in being free *from* all that would fain make us subject to our own underworld, and on the other in being inwardly free *towards* all that Spirit can present as an aim. We can now utter the last word on the subject of freedom of thought, the last at any rate in the scheme of this book. Freedom of thought if it is really to be set up as an ideal, does not consist in the right to express one's opinion freely, however false and harmful it may be: it consists solely, but also entirely, in *freedom to think and speak the truth*. This formulation, and this alone, determines beforehand all progress that is possible on the road of knowledge. It binds the ideas of freedom, of truth, and of responsibility into one indissoluble unity, but responsibility in its turn implies the courage to take risks. And it is in this way that this truth, for which man ought verily to sacrifice his life, is never an abstract formula of any kind: none of these latter will stand criticism for ever. It is always that concrete truth of each man, the analysis of which constituted the first chapter of the present book. We began our 'readjustment of definitions,' to use a technical term of ancient China, by unmasking the error which is at the basis of the current expression '*ma vérité*' (my truth), and of the

concept it expresses ; we end by outlining the positive whole which corresponds to the same conception. Primarily it is not a question of speaking or knowing, but of *being* the truth. We must be the truth in the sense Jesus meant when he said : ' I am the truth.' All other value is valid only as a function of the value of being.

He who thus bases his whole life on his free being, bases it at the same time on his magic power. In the depths of his nature, man is by no means inert Ganic being, but properly speaking a magician. And it is as a magician that every man has acted who has become so free inwardly that what is free in him has become solely and wholly determinant. A man of this kind is in no way cramped in movement by the indissoluble tie which binds the empirical part of him to the process of Nature. For himself and in himself, however much he may appear hampered, he has already freed himself from these bonds. ' As by a miracle ' the accidents which befall him have another significance and turn out otherwise than they should do according to men's judgments. Sometimes he appears inexhaustible in his productiveness, or indefatigable, sometimes protected as by a charm against illness and infection. Or else even in extreme old age and up to the day of his death he still remains young. Outwardly a free man of this kind calls forth still more magical effects. The afflicted and the oppressed who come to him, he frees as if it were a matter of course ; nearly all the problems which weigh upon them are suddenly revealed at his touch to be no longer problems. Without even willing it, he cures the indolent and inert of their indolence and inertia, the cowards of their cowardice, the unbelieving of their want of faith. His mere presence makes the spiritually blind to see ; those who are conscious of having sinned feel themselves absolved and delivered. As for the free man himself, when he spends himself thus in pure radiance, always giving out without ever receiving, he rises inwardly to a height where he towers above, far above, all Hunger

and all Fear, all possible care, and all possible exclusiveness. Thus he becomes the pure chalice which is filled with Joy and knows all Blessedness to which man, as he is to-day, can attain on this Earth.

I have of set purpose crowned our last observations with an ideal image which, as I have traced it, may perhaps never be attained : may it live on now, with an independent life, in the soul of the reader, and bring forth fruit in him. As for the whole train of ideas which I have just set forth under the heading of Freedom, it will only find its completion and its culmination in the following chapter. But as every man, in the depths of his heart, desires joy and not the dull grey of disillusion, it is clear henceforward that every man, wherever he seeks his blessedness, can find happiness only in freedom. And since it depends personally on each man whether he lays the accent in himself on one place rather than another, and with greater or less force ; since what is free lives in every man and each man is in the depths of his heart the index-finger of his own scales, whether he knows it or not ; and since finally it is no question here of attaining a stable and final result, but of remaining alert and tense from moment to moment, it is given to every man to become the creator of his own freedom. The road is marked out for him by the most beautiful of the sayings of Meister Eckhart : ‘ Try always to be like a man who is beginning his life.’ As for him who is in doubt and despair, another saying of the same Master will give him courage : ‘ If it is not the Will that thou hast lacked but only the power, of a truth, in the sight of God, thou has done all.’



## FULFILMENT

**I**N THE FOUR PRECEDING CHAPTERS, WHICH ARE THE continuation of the seven essays in *Problems of Personal Life*, and form one body with them, we have explored and so far as possible determined the complexity of human nature and the multiplicity of its constituent strata, in all directions which are important from the point of view of personal life. We have everywhere ascertained that this complexity was irreducible ; so we are entitled henceforth to consider all monism, all monophysism, and in general every attempt to find a common denominator for human nature, as null and non-existent. When he said : ‘ To accept and postulate the Ego is a practical need,’ G. Chr. Lichtenberg was nearer the truth than any adherent of a dogma of unity. In the same way the ancient Egyptians, the Hindus, the Persians, and lastly the Japanese, peoples which all credit man with a large number of souls,<sup>1</sup> a number which increases with the greatness of his personality, were nearer the truth than Faust when he cried : ‘ Two souls, alas, dwell in me ! ’ There is no single constituent element in man, but can, if it gets the benefit of a quickening attention and accentuation, become an Ego or at least a rudimentary one, and so play the part of a dominant in the melody of life. Conversely there exists no element on which natural necessity would confer supremacy, and certainly none which can

<sup>1</sup> See the detailed study of this question in the author’s *Immortality* (Oxford University Press).

finally repress other centres of life without at the same time deforming and degrading the man as a whole. For man is always the vehicle and the incarnation of countless lines of evolution, each one of which obeys special norms. He is their geometric locus, or—to employ another image—the web which, in every given state of things, he makes, or has made out of him, by weaving together the manifold threads of his life ; threads which are more numerous in proportion as a nature is richer and loftier. No doubt the dull-witted wife of a brute who is the slave of his low passions, may be defined, almost exhaustively, as simple female : as soon as it is a question of historical figures, it is just when we are determining their personality that we cannot abstract from lines of historical evolution which stretch far beyond the limits of the individual. In the same way as soon as it is a question of spiritual figures, we cannot, if we wish to comprehend their intrinsic being, abstract from their significance in the scheme of the evolution of the human Spirit. What do I say ? It is indeed impossible to determine any man whatever exactly and to grasp him as he is in the concrete, without taking account of the moment in history which forms the setting of his life. If then we wish to maintain the idea of the unity of human nature the only formula which is not false is this : its unity is the interconnexion of its multiplicity ; it is this synthesis in him of an infinity of elements, in themselves irreducible, which constitutes what the West has, almost without exception, misunderstood, interpreting it as simple unity in a straight line in a single stratum. That is why every attempt at simplification of the problem of life, such as, at different times and on different planes, has been attempted by monotheism, economic materialism, pan-idealism, Islam, etc., cannot fail to lead to a complication of the problem. In proportion as a simplification eliminates from the field of observation realities which actually exist, it does away with the possibility of an integral life free from the shackles which deform these realities ; hence all those

maladies, those difficulties, and those catastrophes which fill the greater part of history. Man is assuredly not a monad, but a microcosm, whose boundaries can no more be measured and fixed once for all than can those of the Universe.

But subjectively, and for itself, human personality when awakened to spiritual consciousness can, in the last resort, identify itself only with a single element in its constitution : with ' what is free ' in it. From time immemorial it is to the working out, the strengthening, and intensifying of this free and lonely element that all desire for inward growth and perfection has aspired. On the other hand, it is as indissolubly related to the growth and decay of this element that all consciousness of personality grows and decays. The unconditioned rule of what is free is the true ideal of life, and it is to this alone that all rightly understood belief in immortality refers. But on the plane of facts the freedom of this lonely principle is anything but absolute. It represents only *one* centre of forces in the whole system of the human being, and it is only in relation to this system in its entirety that the concept of freedom finds a concrete or substantial content. It follows that this element can rule and govern the other elements which constitute human nature, and through the medium of this nature the exterior world also, only in a qualified sense. What is this sense ? It is that of the *artist* who creates forms. However purely spiritual the source of his inspiration may be, to realize it in the world of Earth, the artist will have to accept the specific nature of the material in which he works and the laws which govern it, whether it is a question of musical rhythm, harmony, and counterpoint, of the scale of relative ' value ' for colours and sounds, of the gravity or chemical qualities of the matter manipulated, of the logic of thoughts and feelings, or of grammar and syntax. In exactly the same way ' what is free ' is compelled in all domains, if it desires to realize its intentions, to begin by understanding and accepting

all the data of human nature which come into the field of its potential action. Having reached this point, we may determine without further gradation, the positive aspect of this state of things, which at first glance seems negative. If what is free adjusts itself in this sense, if it establishes itself in the attitude we have just outlined, *then the man is absolutely as free as he desires to be*. It is not true that he ever tends to quit the universal system of interconnexion. It may well happen that he desires to go away to other and better worlds : whatever particular end he pursues on each occasion, he pursues in relation to the Universe. For his freedom is nothing in itself : it can manifest itself only as power which governs and transforms the given nature. Because this is so, no man who really understands himself has ever aspired to any freedom wider than that of the artist. This explains why everyone agrees in holding the creative artist as the most free of human beings, and as the most free among artists the great classic who is capable of imposing the strictest forms on the most rebellious and thankless material, by breathing into it a wholly personal soul as Bach did with simple five-finger exercises.

From what has just been settled, this fundamental truth follows : *the proper plane of human life is by no means that of nature but that of art*. In formulating this thesis we have combined the results of the two last essays in *The Art of Life* : ' Life is an Art ' and ' Culture of Beauty.' As all that I should have to say in exposition of the thoughts set forth above has already been said in these two essays, it is needless for me to devote attention to them here. On the other hand the context of this essay allows me to continue in a new direction the train of reflexions contained in the two essays referred to. *If the plane proper to human life is that of Art, if then the properly human life does not follow the natural trend of organic earthly existence, if finally Art as the expression of what is free in man has its source in Spirit alone*—what is the normal position of Spirit confronted with the data of

Nature? The first answer to this question is contained in the thesis we have already formulated on many other occasions: in Man the relation of Spirit to Nature is *a relation of tension*. If for the word 'tension' we substitute 'distance'—this word will cause no ambiguity if we think of the relation between the artist and the material he manipulates: it is patent that the artist to have command of his material must succeed in fixing the distance between it and himself—this change, by itself alone, will lead us to a deeper understanding of the true relation which exists between 'life conceived as an art' and 'empirical life'; it will at the same time allow us to bring this particular problem within the general scheme of problems with a human bearing (as distinct from their epistemological bearing), with which this book deals. When we say of anyone that he is 'above' certain things or that such and such a thing 'does not touch him,' Western people generally think of the particular kind of distance which characterizes an ironical man, or a man detached in the sense that his attitude to things sets him outside them or at the outer edge of them. Now genuine detachment never has its origin and ground in that irony which impels a man to disown his solidarity with the whole of things, and never means that a man has fixed his centre of consciousness outside or at the outer edge of life. On the contrary the detachment which implies real distance means that a man has *drawn nearer* to the spiritual centre of his life, that he has become not more outward but more inward, that in himself, in his inner consciousness, he has reached a higher plane, which sets him above what affects those who are 'of the earth earthly.' Real detachment then amounts to a more intimate attachment to one's own spiritual substance, and the distance it creates is that which normally exists between the surface and the centre of an indivisible whole. But the man who in this way has set distance between his Self and what is *given* by Nature, embraces and masters and controls and governs, owing to that very fact, a far greater range of

natural data. It is as if the man was raised from a simple equation to one of the third degree. The latter implies the former, it sets and includes it in a much higher synthesis within which terms that are usually mutually exclusive appear connected and complementary, and thus does away with superficial conflicts. Let us now go back to the simile suggested in the essay 'On Concentration' (*The Art of Life*), the simile of a spiritual Universe exhibited in the dimension of pure inwardness alone, and lying at right angles to the horizontal surface of the outer universe (contained within the two dimensions of 'space' and 'time') into which it fits. We can then express ourselves as follows: the word distance indicates the possession and the mastery of the extensive by the intensive. Now clearly such mastery is possible only within the scheme of a field of tension. So we can go a little farther still and say: distance, as such, *creates* tension.

Nor is this all. The proposition which follows is equally true: distance as such is the power which rules from within. As we know, a king can fully manifest his rank as king and the power which this rank bestows upon him, only if he maintains a regal distance between himself and his subjects. It is in this sense that etiquette, the admission of a demand step by step through all the windings of the hierarchy of officialdom, and finally, on a still higher level in the case of a ruler by legitimate descent, a specific consciousness of Self relating to the consecrated blood-royal, and to a plane of consciousness on which questions and conflicts of a narrow and petty character are not even perceptible, maintain from first to last that distance which creates the tension which alone renders possible any specific royal action. Indeed, in proportion as the equation is exact, such distance establishes between the king and his people a magnetic field of polar tension, which produces in both of its two complementary poles positive corresponding effects. I have selected the most obvious instance by way of illustration. But the state of fact is the same wherever anyone is really

above any datum or situation. The original relation of the creative artist to the matter in which he works, is likewise a relation of tension born of distance. If the majority of events do not touch the perfect sage, whereas they destroy the equilibrium of other men, if even, in the highest case, external misfortune takes flight before him so that assassins do not slay him, thieves do not rob him, traitors do not betray him, this is certainly not due to his indifference—no one is less indifferent than the man whose attitude is positive towards one and all—but to the overmastering force of the field of tension created by his inward remoteness. As to the highest types of the man 'far removed': the hero who, in defiance of all rational calculation, chances the impossible and triumphs thanks to this very foolishness, the saint for whom guilt and sin, virtue and vice, no longer have any meaning such as they have for others, and who radiates the intensest joy in the midst of the cruellest tortures—they all have, thanks to the centre from which they live, greater remoteness from the rank and file of mortals than any king ever had, thanks to ceremonial, to etiquette, and to his despotic power. Now let us think again of what we ascertained in the chapter 'Solitude': a Spirit sufficiently powerful 'calls up,' in the textual sense of the word, the empirical data which corresponds to it. It calls forth the matter to which it is created to give form: men, friends as well as enemies, fate in the widest sense of the term. By so doing it wins them over to, it appropriates them for, it incorporates them into, it assimilates them to, itself. But this is never done save in a field of force of extreme tension setting in motion a polar circuit which transforms at the same time both the Spirit and the obstacles in its way. It is at this point that we understand finally why struggle and outward adversity are necessary for every great Spirit in view of his realization and incarnation. Difficulties and resistance call forth the feeling of his own identity. They awaken and stimulate, in direct ratio to their strength, his refusal to adapt himself, and so his

urge to victory. So the greater the inward remoteness is, the more it creates a drawing together, not in the sense of a compromise, but in that of a marriage. This alone, I would say, explains the fact that polarization each time leads (let the reader recall what was said in the essay on polarization in *The Art of Life*) to the birth of a *new* being.

Thus it is just from distance kept and tension borne, and not from reconciliation or compromise, that the newborn child represented by any work of art comes into being in contrast to the given empirical material which it puts into shape. To put it otherwise, it is just genuine superiority which creates the most intensive union which Spirit can achieve in relation to matter. As a matter of fact it is only from inward remoteness that a work of art is ever born, whether it is a love-poem as distinct from a love-adventure, a political order which establishes an equilibrium adapted to the significance of all the national forces in action, as distinct from the blind disorder of isolated conflicts, or more generally whether it is a question of life determined by Spirit as distinct from a happy-go-lucky inertia. The majority of works of art recognized as such represent, however, only particular and specialized products of Spirit. But it must now be perfectly clear to everyone without further argument that the supreme work of art is human life itself in so far as it is transfigured by Spirit.

This brings us to the idea of a truth which at first glance appears paradoxical : only the man who succeeds in establishing a relation of remoteness between himself and what is given by Nature in his life can attain to Fulfilment. In reality all life of Gana is finite and limited ; each of its manifestations is like a melody which is born, develops, and dies, as a definite form, from which there is no transition possible to other melodies, and which, on its own level, never forms part of a greater melodic whole, which would interweave and embrace particular melodies. This is why every man who allows himself to be dragged down the slope of his Gana is deaf to all except the one



melody played. In the most primitive case his life is like that of an animal devoid of intelligence who is possessed from moment to moment by a single exclusive impulse. But what is true of a life played out entirely on the plane of Gana is equally true of all life which never rises above the orders of sensation and emotion.<sup>1</sup> Whoever is possessed by a sensation, a feeling, or an emotion so completely as to be unable to rise above their level, is as blind and deaf to all other possible content of his consciousness as Ganic being is. It is only Spirit which, breaking in upon these closed orders, lights up their outlines and renders possible a view beyond their horizons. This is to say that every life not illuminated by Spirit is narrow, confined, and poverty-stricken; excluding all reality but that which fills its consciousness at the present moment it is, though passing in time, discontinuous and without memory. This being so, it is clearly impossible to attain to Fulfilment except by rising above the earthly plane to that of Spirit, which alone creates for consciousness the synthesis of all that co-exists at the same moment, and by memory creates continuity of all which follows it. Now from the manifold analyses and observations contained in the present book and in all those of which it is the sequel and expansion, the fact emerges that *Fulfilment* is the only ideal which can be set up as a common denominator of all human aspirations. In truth, if no positive solution of the equation of life is possible, unless, to begin with, all its facts are accepted as they really are, unless by the cultivation of truthfulness, an agreement is established between being and existence on the one hand, and consciousness and representation on the other, in fine, unless the subject aspires to the greatest possible openness to the world—how can Fulfilment help being the final goal, the supreme end of human life? This is so evident that all further discussion on this point is needless.

<sup>1</sup> See the characterization of these specific orders contained in the chapters 'Delicadeza,' 'Emotional Order,' and 'Sorrow,' of my *South American Meditations*.

For salvation in the religious sense, moral perfection, complete knowledge, happiness, and beauty, all these ends are, in the last analysis, themselves only particular aspects of *Fulfilment*. But at the same time it is obvious that Fulfilment—paradoxical at first sight—can only be attained in proportion as man inwardly stands aloof from the processes of Nature. Because the proper plane of properly human nature is that of Spirit. Because it is the art of life and not natural life which corresponds to the human state, just as Ganic life corresponds to the animal state.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT STANDS IN A RELATION OF REMOTENESS and tension not to Nature alone, but also to the higher Spiritual Powers. It is these latter to which we shall now devote ourselves in order to delimit the whole of the vast field embraced by the problem of Fulfilment. That higher Spiritual Powers exist admits of no doubt for any consciousness which faithfully reflects its own underlying spiritual nature. And as in the psychic domain it is the subjective which ultimately counts—all psychic experience relates in the last resort to a subject—and as there is never any means of making this subject into an object without stripping it of its very identity, no theoretical doubts and no logical considerations could ever invalidate the experience a human being has had of what is generally called the Divine. C. G. Jung once wrote an essay on the idea of God: confessing that he was himself an agnostic, he nevertheless arrived at the result that, from the scientific point of view, there could be no question of disputing the reality of what this idea stands for. For *in every case* he said 'God is a psychological function that can be demonstrated.' Now the overwhelming majority of the deepest spirits of all ages have had such profound and striking experiences of the higher Spiritual Powers

that, whatever may be the explanations which must ultimately be given of them, one could not without anti-scientific bias, dispute their transcendent reality. This, incidentally, is the *raison d'être* of all religion and of all philosophy. Man would never make such desperate endeavours to understand individual existence as an integral part of a universal synthesis, if a veritable inward compulsion did not oblige him in thought and feeling to quit the confined and closed circle of his earthly existence.

But this state of things does not alter the fact that it remains exceedingly difficult to give any clear account of what these higher Spiritual Powers are, and what their significance is. For my part I see only one means of making their existence intelligible in the smallest degree : it is by stating the problem in the following way.

That on the plane of Nature the series of generations and, more generally, the group exist before the individual is self-evident.<sup>1</sup> Everywhere in the organic world, the individual, so far as he exists in the human sense, stands out against an infra-individual and collective background. In man, this state of things, which is in principle the same for him as for all organisms, is manifested as follows. He embodies in himself, as an integral part of his nature, on one side primary individual tendencies which are exclusively individual, and on the other collective tendencies which are equally primary and original, which live and act on their own plane without being traceable to the individual. Having dealt with this problem at length in the chapter 'Socialism' in my *America Set Free*, I may here confine myself to this short statement. Now the collective reality in question belongs entirely to the earthly order : it is not governed by any spiritual principle. Hence, by necessity both of nature and logic, that materialism which all collectivism and all socialism manifests in one form or another. The instant the collectivity is set above the individual, man is com-

<sup>1</sup> For further details see the author's *Immortality* (Oxford University Press).

elled to admit that matter has primacy over Spirit. Often he is not conscious of admitting it. But then the systems he invents show all the more clearly what his unconscious tendency is. Now this same collectivity which, in itself, belongs solely to the earthly order, may serve as the vehicle for spiritual reality : this phenomenon is to be seen every time that an individual finds he is the bearer of a historic destiny, or of a spiritual or cultural mission, of which no impartial observer can deny the existence. In the case of such a mission I see no other means of interpreting intelligibly an experience which stares us in the face, but by admitting the intervention of spiritual powers higher than the individual. This same Jung of whom I spoke above has, in his book, *Wirklichkeit der Seele*, where he deals with the problem of destiny, a play upon words when he writes *Bestimmung* as *Be-stimmung*. The dictionary, which sticks to the conventional and abstract meaning of concepts, usually translates this word by 'mission' or 'destiny.' But its original etymological meaning amounts to 'being directed by an inward voice.' Now Jung shows that it is just in this original sense that 'mission' or 'destiny' corresponds to a reality which cannot be denied. He lays it down that a very large number of those people who have been or who are conscious of a mission, have experienced and still experience the same as expressing the urgency and the demands of a voice, other than their own Ego. From the standpoint of our philosophy of Spirit, it is not difficult to understand why this should be so. When the spiritual personality is born or, what comes to the same thing, when Spirit breaks-in upon a soul already differentiated, and takes up its abode as the core of it, there must at first be manifested a difference, clearly perceived by consciousness, between the Ego and this new core, and it is just this new centre forming which makes itself known in the shape of a voice coming from within. This schism may affect an infinite number of grades and modes of life, according to the level on which the spiritual personality

is forming, and the potential synthesis may take on an infinity of different forms. One of the highest is expressed in the words of the Apostle Paul : ' It is not I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.' The sublimest of all those which we other Western people have ever known, Meister Eckhart, the great German mystic of the thirteenth century, expresses in his concept of *Entwordensein*.<sup>1</sup> Eckhart meant by it an integral spiritualization of life, total and complete, by pure Spirit, the result of which would be a new human condition in which everything in Man that is not Spirit would lose its autonomy and separate significance. Even Socrates' experience of his *δαίμων* (inner voice) has been known by very few, to say nothing of the vision of Paul on the way to Damascus. But none the less, every human being who is a personality in any degree whatsoever, or in process of becoming one, *feels* that he is directed by a Voice. Every man of this kind lives in the first place for his mission. It is in this that he recognizes the personal significance of his life, and so far his true substance.

What is the truth of this personal significance. It relates always both to what is personal and to what is collective in the ordinary meaning of these terms. But on the other hand it does not relate either to the private caprices of the individual or to the demands of the empirical collectivity. This is so true that, so far as individual desires are concerned, the cry of Jesus in the darkness of the garden on the Mount of Olives : ' Father, take away this cup from me,' is the prototype attitude, and on the other hand nearly all the great emissaries of an inward Voice find themselves in opposition to what their collectivities expect and demand of them. Thus, this

<sup>1</sup> This word, which cannot be directly translated, means very nearly, in an extremely condensed form, ' the state in which a man lives who has stripped himself,' or, better still, ' set free from all limits in which he is confined by birth, and more generally by his condition as man.' Let there be no mistake : there is no question here in any way of asceticism or of denying what is human, Eckhart is not in the least a mystic of religious *feeling* (the pietist kind), but a mystic of man's integral nature.

same Jesus, though He felt He was the Messiah, rejected the part assigned once for all by Israelite tradition to the Messiah who was to come. In reality a man's deepest mission never coincides with his vocation in the current sense of the term, nor with his empirical task set by the collectivity. Every time it is a question of something personal, but of a particular kind, trans-personal or trans-subjective in some way ; it is a question always of what is collective, but at the same time trans-collective. There is indeed a necessary relation between these two collectives ; it is this and this alone : a universal spiritual principle expresses itself through the medium of a generic collective. Now I have explained elsewhere that meta-physical reality is both trans-collective and trans-personal ; it is for this reason that a mission is historical not merely always but by its very essence : personal uniqueness and collective necessity combine in the accomplishment of a spiritual task which is set in its given form only in one particular place and at one particular moment. It is this conjunction which the Greek word *καιρός* denotes—we have translated it up till now by 'historic moment'—within the uniform lapse of time. Here a profound and essential relation shows itself between what is purely personal and what is valid for all, a relation which for us has found its classical expression in the myth of Christ.

Nevertheless what is historical, or historical significance, never represents the ultimate and supreme value for personal life, and this is true even for personalities whose importance is primarily historical. This aspect has been brought to light so happily by Wilhelm Rössle in his book, *Heroische Politik* (Jena, 1934), that I am going to quote a passage from it :

'It is only when a historical task coincides with a personal mission that history is favourable to personality. In this case history is capable of elevating the personal into the supra-personal. In all other cases it has no esteem for personality, it prefers a uniform mass, the

instrument of a leader or of a silent will. Personalities thrive under the shadow of history, or struggling against it, but seldom by swimming with the stream. The results of history benefit the individual, but are generally gained against his will. The relation of the individual to the State illustrates one aspect of this state of things. The individual grows with the State, but the latter also oppresses him to serve its own ends. It gives the individual support and steadiness, it forms and moulds him, it supplies him with a setting and a foothold, but it also bestows on him schemas, formulas, latch-keys, uniforms, and categorical instructions.'

Indeed, so far as the personal fate of the immense majority of human beings goes, the fact of living 'at' a great epoch means nothing at all. Conversely, the more clearly those who are the vehicles of a fate important to the Universe are conscious of their mission, and the stronger they are as characters, the humbler they feel. They feel that their personality as such counts for nothing at all. If they are fully awakened to Spirit they state the question quite differently from what the admiring and envious expect. On the one hand they realize their personality by accomplishing their historic mission, but on the other, given the immense mass of impersonal elements they are compelled to represent, they cannot help asking: what shall I do to live my personal life while I am, and though I am, a factor in history? For the personal, the supra-personal, and the infra-personal never coincide exactly.

It is from the starting-point of this supreme form of potential action, derived from the feeling of membership of the community, that we can determine how the individual should behave towards this latter. He should set all collective problems and satisfy all collective demands *from himself as starting-point*, exclusively from himself, from his intrinsic personality. The empirical collectivity is not supra-personal but infra-personal. Certainly no

progress allows man to pass beyond this infra-personal which belongs indissolubly to the soul of every individual as the vital basis of what is individual ; certainly man can only yield his full measure when, while accomplishing a trans-subjective mission, he is at the same time the mouthpiece of the community and uses it as his means of expression. But all this does not alter the fact that the individual being, lonely and unique, must think from the standpoint of himself, even in questions which concern the community.

The possible identity just outlined between his mission and his personal will is inaccessible, it is true, to anyone but a very great man. In the case of the majority it is in this respect more or less the same as it is with one's outward profession, which never corresponds perfectly to one's personal tastes. Even for great historical personages, there was nearly always, right down to the end of their life, an exceedingly curious severance between their mission and their tastes and inclinations. Most of those who were guided by an inner voice were literally what we mean when we call them ' mouthpieces ' or ' spokesmen ' of the group they represented ; they fulfilled their task, but as private persons they appeared to be astonishingly little interested in it. The results and repercussions of their action had to appear before they consented to affirm its authenticity in relation to their personal being, so that it was, so to speak, only secondarily that they felt themselves bound with regard to their own mission.

It is thus that the unity of mankind often manifests itself in the form of a regular puzzle. No fragment has any meaning by itself and yet together they make up a complete picture. When I say this I am thinking not only of the simultaneous appearance of great sages and founders of religions, such as took place at one universal moment in history five centuries before Jesus Christ, nor yet thinking only of the proved fact that a man may live from birth for a mission he does not know of, which circumstances yet unborn will later demand and render



manifest : I say puzzle literally. To make this mysterious fact somewhat more intelligible, I will here record the strange story entitled 'The Treasure' which Martin Buber has culled from the Cassidic books, for only pictures which call up visions can in such cases make the truth intelligible in the slightest degree. Here is the story.

'To young folk who came to see him for the first time, the rabbi Bunam was wont to relate the story of the rabbi Eisik, son of the rabbi Jékel of Cracovia. The latter, after many years of great poverty and distress which had in no way shaken his trust in God, received in a dream an order to go to Prague to seek for a treasure beneath the bridge which leads to the King's castle. When this dream had come to him three times the rabbi Eisik started off and went to Prague. But the guard-house troops occupied the bridge night and day and he dared not begin to dig up the earth. However, he went to the bridge every morning and prowled around till evening. At length a captain of the guard, struck by this proceeding, asked him if he was looking for anything in that place, or whether he was waiting for anybody. The rabbi then related the dream which had brought him hither from his distant country. "Poor wretch ! Then have you come all this way with your shoes in holes for the sake of a dream ? A pretty thing a dream is ! If one had to believe in dreams I, too, should have had to set out when one night I was bidden in a dream to go to Cracovia and look in the room of a Jew—he was to be called Eisik the son of Jékel—for a treasure hidden under the stove. Eisik the son of Jékel ! I think I see myself going off there where half the Jews are called Eisik and the other half Jékel, and ransacking all the houses in the ghetto !" And he burst into laughter. The rabbi Eisik bowed, went back home, dug up the treasure buried under the stove and built a house of prayer called the "School of Reb Eisik the son of Reb

Jékel.' Keep in mind this story, the rabbi Bunam was wont to add, and remember what it teaches you : that there is one thing you can find nowhere in the whole world not even in the Zaddik, and yet there is one place where you may find it.'

WE NEED INSIST NO FARTHER. LET US GO ON TO another aspect of the same problem. A wise man, who does not belong to any particular dogmatic religion which plainly commands him to act in such and such a manner in the name of God, if he pursues his ideal at the sacrifice of his interest, does so each time he thinks about it, in the belief that humanity requires this sacrifice of him, or else he consents to it for the good of humanity. What does this mean? That the profound man feels greater obligations towards an idea of Spirit than towards an empirical collectivity whose existence can be demonstrated. For as a fact Humanity does not exist ; it exists only on the plane of Spirit. Now on this latter plane it denotes a reality of the same order as that to which the higher spiritual powers belong. Even the man who does not believe in any positive religion then feels himself to exist more truly as Spirit than as an earthly being. I have treated thoroughly the relation of humanity to empirical collectivities in the chapter 'Humanity and Nations' of *La Révolution Mondiale*, and so need not go back to it. Let us, however, recall the following results. This purely spiritual unity which humanity is, *exists* on its own plane, for the deepest consciousness, not only *before* all individuals, but before all collectivities more restricted than itself. It is to this entity that all Christ's commands refer ; in the name of it He commands us to love our neighbour, whether he be friend or enemy, for in reality on the plane of Spirit all men are integral parts of one indissoluble whole ; and at bottom the

Hindu doctrine of ' *Tat twam asi*,' of the unity of all that exists, also means the same thing. It is to humanity only that every idea of spiritual unity relates: there exists no unity but that which has its throne not only above all individuals, but also above all peoples, all religious communities, or all particular conceptions of the world. It is only to humanity, never to more restricted groups, that the values called absolute and eternal relate. That is to say, they do not relate to any empirical order of any kind whatsoever, but always and exclusively to the original spiritual underlying nature in each man, a nature which is of no particular or general order but *universal*.

This purely spiritual universal order has found in our world of Christian culture a specific incarnation: *the Church*. The original idea which lies at the basis of it is best rendered by the fundamental concept of orthodox Russian theology, *Sobornost*, because that has to do with a functional concept: understood literally it embraces simultaneously the ideas of cathedral, of council, of group-concentration; it denotes then a collective spiritual body into which on the one hand Spirit pours itself, and which on the other hand, before the numerically and quantitatively superior power of the non-spiritual forces in man, assures for Man's spiritual part a particular habitation, organized and functioning exclusively according to the norms of Spirit. The best-endowed peoples, religiously speaking, in history, have not known and still do not know the idea of the Church. No doubt this idea does not correspond to any religious necessity. The existence of the Church, so far as I can see, has three essential reasons: Christian dogma from the first centuries, according to which the son of God is supposed to have instituted the Church for the welfare of mankind, but still more the Roman juridical Spirit which desired to see all order fixed once for all, and Germanic institutionalism which tended to imprison all vital impulses as speedily as possible in constituted institutions and

organisms. It is of little importance, however, to what extent the Church is conditioned by historical contingencies : the idea which lies at the basis of the Russian *Sobornost* is true for all men.<sup>1</sup> Spirit everywhere demands unity ; it unifies the multiple and the complex in the dimension of intensity. But that is only one of the aspects of this relation : on another side Spirit spiritualizes from within every complexity it breaks-into. By so doing it really unifies it inwardly. And thus a new unity is manifested, a new concentration of the collective soul, which in its ecclesiastical incarnation is called in German, as distinct from all other groups, 'Gemeinde,'<sup>2</sup> and is destined to include all men in order to realize the divine scheme of salvation, but is, in reality, independent of every organization. On the idea of the Church so instituted and organized from the standpoint of the orthodox concept of *Sobornost*, Berdiaiev has written the most beautiful and the profoundest words I know. In his *Philosophie de l'Esprit libre*, he says :

'The experience of the Church begins at the moment when I rise above the narrowness and the closed framework of my inner world, at the moment when I enter into the unity of the vast spiritual world, at the moment when I rise above all division and separation, all space and time. Spiritual life is metaphysically social, not individualist. In the experience of the Church I am not alone ; I communicate with all my brothers in Spirit, whatever be the place or time in which they live. By myself I am limited and restricted, I know very little. My experience does not take in the manifold fullness of being ; many decisive spiritual encounters I myself have not had. But I can go out of myself,

<sup>1</sup> The problem of the Church has been discussed at length in the chapters 'The Religious Problem' and 'The Ultimate Significance of Freedom' in *Recovery of Truth*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Gemeinde.' This word, which normally signifies 'parish' or 'religious community,' means at the same time 'what is common.'

can metaphysically over-pass the limits of my Self; I can share in the experience of those who are my relatives and my kinsmen in Spirit, share in supernatural experience. In religious experience within the bosom of the Church, in meeting with Christians, man is not alone: he does not remain the captive of his narrowness; he is in communion with all those who, no matter at what epoch, have had the same experience, he is united to the whole of Christendom: to the apostles, the saints, to the brethren in Christ, to the living and the dead. For it is not only the generations of the living who belong to the Church, but also, in quite as real a way, the hosts of all who are departed: they, in the bosom of the Church are all alive, there exists a real communion with them. In the Church, in the spirit of union with a common centre and of recollection we feel the beating of a single common heart."

These short reflexions should suffice to make it clear that the idea of the Church is in no way distinct in reality from that of Humanity, as spiritual entity; it represents this idea embodied in certain historical contingencies which have not existed in any other order of culture in quite the same sense as in our own, and might very easily one day cease to exist in Europe.

Let us go back now to the problem of remoteness and tension which characterizes the relation of Spirit to Nature. What tension, what remoteness, could be greater than that which exists between the consecrated religious life and the secular life? Never in any way can the norms of the one be valid for those of the other. Now since the religious life is governed exclusively by spiritual norms, on *its own* level it manifests with the utmost clearness, that the proper plane of properly human life is that of art. This is shown with greater force when we are dealing with a race of men which is both young and profound. Life as conceived by societies possessed of

these two qualities is exclusively 'show play' as I have called the life proper of Spirit in the chapter, 'Divina Commedia' of my *South American Meditations*. This 'show play' takes absolutely no account of what we call natural realities. In this sense we should have a right to say that nearly all particular history has begun with a 'prologue in heaven.' In the scheme of our Christian tradition, the first relatively exact determinations of human nature were expressed as functions of the divine nature. The condemnation of the Monophysites represented the first decision in the direction of the notions we have expounded as to the complexity of human nature. The dogma of the twofold nature of Christ was the first proclamation of a truthful vision of the incompatibility existing in man between what is earthly and what is spiritual. The doctrine of the Trinity, which implicitly condemned all monotheism as heretical, represented a step forward in the direction of an exact doctrine of the complexity of man's nature. The fact that this prologue took place 'in heaven' is due to the fact that man is conscious only of a restricted part of his nature, and that even this part he can only integrate partially in his consciousness. But as those parts which cannot be integrated are no less alive and no less eager to realize themselves, they manifest themselves in the shape of projections in the outer world. Primitive man beholds if not everything, at any rate nearly everything that is inward as outside himself, not by personifying everything, but simply in that nothing in himself properly constitutes a person. 'At this level,' says Jung, 'there are only events, not any persons acting'; at this stage of evolution man only succeeds in distinguishing very confusedly between what he does and what happens to him. It is thus that, at the beginning, no child has consciousness of his Self: it exists for him in the shape of a third person. But on the other hand primitive Man perceives and sees in the outer world, important as it is for him, only his own interior images.

Hence the primacy of the myth as compared to an exact conception of external reality as it really is. In the scheme of the myth all representations belong at first to a single plane of existence. And when primitive man learns to distinguish between what is inwardly given and what outwardly, as experience soon enough compels him to do, this does not at first lead him to distinguish between subjective and objective, between inward and outward, between palpable facts and images, but simply leads to a discrimination between images qualitatively different belonging to the same external world, which contains on the same plane, along with animals, plants, and stones, also gods, demons, and spirits. And as his inward experience, unlike ours, teaches him that these latter beings are superior both in number and in power, and as besides he is never certain that plants and animals are not in reality spirits in disguise, he seeks quite logically to master every kind of nature by means which prove efficacious in the mastery of what we other Europeans call the inner world. Hence the primacy of magic not only as over all science and technical skill, but also as over all religion in the sense we give to the word. Religion, considered genetically, is a product of the differentiation of the original experience man has of the world. Hence this primacy of celestial events over terrestrial ones, a primacy which we asserted at the beginning of this chapter.

In conformity with this, the earliest form of life conceived as art is a life of ritual observance. In such a life the accent of importance is laid on rites and ceremonies which allow an equilibrium to be maintained between the interior projected world and the outward world. And many even of these earliest forms, a great number of which survive among us in catholic tradition, are so wise, because they reach a real depth of knowledge, that a very high level of awakened consciousness is needed before it becomes possible to replace them by better forms. The ideal prototype of what we must

to-day consider as the embryonic form of a life conceived as a real art is represented by the Hindu *tantra*. Understood in its deepest sense, it is the incarnation of a metaphysical knowledge valid for all time ; that is why the most awakened consciousness may still learn from it. But the special feature of the *tantra* is that it materializes its esoteric knowledge in exoteric doctrines and practices, the aim of which, pursued with an astounding knowledge of souls, consists in bringing the man who is not yet mature and does not yet 'know,' little by little to conscious knowledge, by means of a retro-active effect upon the Unconscious produced by projected 'names and forms.' It proceeds thus by starting from the premiss from which this book starts : that it is a question of recognizing and treating as such *every* reality which belongs to man, that it is wrong to exclude anything whatsoever, and that life is for man, in the last analysis, an art rendering possible the mastery, within the framework of a single synthesis, of depths and surfaces, of inner and outer phenomena, of the world both sacred and secular.

The primacy which India recognizes in the psychic has as its logical consequence that the whole life of the Hindus who have not advanced beyond 'names and forms,' is a life of the strictest religious observance. There hardly exists a sensation, an emotion, hardly a fate, hardly a contingency, for which the wisdom of successive generations has not created a sacramental pattern in which the individual, under the direction of his spiritual guide, must embody himself in accordance with a rhythm proved good by the experience of countless generations. The aim of this spiritual training, which constitutes the whole life of a Hindu, is to help all instincts, all tendencies, all inclinations, to exert their full activity so as to avoid all suppression which might render them bad or ugly. It is, moreover, to create for every fate the individual will have to endure, an acceptance in anticipation which will render this fate endurable. It is finally



to order the original chaotic complexity of the soul, not only in itself and for itself (as in the West Stoic asceticism and later Protestant Christian asceticism taught), but also to integrate it, in conformity with its true significance, by assigning to it its true place in the whole context of the individual's relations with the community, with the Universe, and with God. It is the same end which the Catholic Church, as I have said, has pursued and attained to a very high degree in the Western world, only *tantra* pursues and attains it within a framework incomparably more vast, without a single dogma to hamper the Spirit, and with a knowledge of the depths and abysses of the soul unequalled even in the Catholic Church. But now, let us note this : direct consciousness of the totality is not at first characteristic of the fully evolved and developed man, it is so on the contrary of the primitive man. It is the still undifferentiated man, not the already differentiated one, who from the very first is capable of an integral experience ; it is only when the level is once attained at which the differentiation by a sort of *volte-face* is transformed into a new integration, that the developed man becomes capable of opening himself to the integral revelation.

Why, in spite of this, does primitive mentality not represent an ideal ? It is because the solution it admits of giving to the problem of life depends strictly on the individual's *want* of initiative. It presupposes in him a disposition entirely passive ready to give itself up and to accept all that happens, independently of all personal comprehension. In this physiological condition, every solution of the problem of life issues from the Unconscious and is established on the plane of the Unconscious. That is why there can be no talk here of progress : here tradition must signify everything, and individual decision nothing. So quite logically Hindu wisdom knows only one possible deliverance from this traditional fixation : to succeed in passing beyond every sort of name and form, that is to say to escape as it were at a tangent from

the rolling wheel of *samsara*. The train of ideas just unfolded is enough to make it evident that the Hindu conception of life as an art, judged from the level of consciousness to which the vanguard of the human race has now attained, must be considered as left behind. For this vanguard it is just the personal initiative of Spirit which matters from first to last. Henceforward what is free, alone, and purely personal is in man the only datum from which the equation of life can be stated and resolved. *And at the same time the curtain falls on the prologue in Heaven.* This prologue is over, the human drama proper begins.

These reflexions, which seem to touch on only one special subject, are enough, it seems to me, to make it clear that henceforward the equation of life must be stated not from the standpoint of religion, or of Spirit, or of happiness to be attained, but only from that of the primacy of the art of life. In linking our newly-acquired notions to the most ancient practices and theories, I think I have also shown in what direction—given the remoteness of the spiritual human self from Nature on the one hand, and from the higher spiritual powers on the other—we must look for the synthesis of the two ideals of absolute openness to the world and of the absolute supremacy of Spirit. In *Problems of Personal Life* I wrote :

‘ If by the emotional order, by Gana and the body, man is bound to Earth, he is originally bound to Spirit by religious feeling. Hence the profound error of the lay spirit. Here France, revolutionary France first and then “ radical ” France, bears a heavy load of guilt in the sight of humanity. The day on which in Paris the goddess Reason was seated on the throne of the ancestral God, was a day as symbolic and at the same time as prophetic in human history, as that on which the Israelites began to adore the Golden Calf. It is true that this new religion, like every religion arbitrarily created, vanished very speedily as such. But it still survives to-day in the very Latin opposition between

laicism and clericalism, as well as in the indifferentism or the agnosticism of the intellectuals in the face of the "anti-modern" belief of those who remain believing and practising Christians. Now true Spirit is never laic, for in essence it does not belong to the natural order as conceived by Science; its prototype is and always will be what Christian tradition calls the Holy Spirit. For Spirit is not identical either with intelligence or with so-called pure reason; these two faculties are means, among others, of adaptation to life. And if in the eyes of Hindus, of Greeks, and of Christians from St. John to St. Thomas Aquinas, the principle of the "Logos" (and so "logic") has stood for a truly spiritual principle, this is because in these epochs metaphysical Spirit had embodied itself in the rational earthly order, as it may embody itself in any "given" whatsoever. It is thus that Christian love has sometimes succeeded in transfiguring earthly love, and it is thus that aspiration towards the absolute Good has been able to permeate even politics which in itself is in reality the most odious projection of the human underworld.'

Previously, in *Creative Understanding* (published in 1922), I had written :

'Whatever the contingencies and the circumstances may be, it is always the inward spiritual attitude, the deepest element every man contains, which decides whether a man is placed high or low in the scale of beings, whether he is base or noble, whether he loses or gains ground. Now Psycho-analysis declares that the foundation on which life rests is often a falsehood. In an extreme case this falsehood materializes in the shape of some grave physical malady. The patient can then be cured—if cure is still possible—only by substituting accepted truth for the falsehood on which his life was built up. Are not the majority of healthy

Europeans to-day in much the same situation? Our traditional spiritual attitude no longer allows us to dominate and master our fate. But we can change this inner spiritual attitude. And such change is enough to give our life a new depth. Every man knows that shifting of the accent of importance which takes place in religious conversion. The task laid upon us now is to bring about an identical shifting over the whole extent of the domain of life. Religiousness, in the proper sense of the term, presupposes a particular inward attitude, a particular "centre-ing," and it is not possible to make this attitude universal, without offending against the laws which govern other realities. In this connexion that was a necessary stage in the psychological development of humanity in which religion, totalitarian at first, made itself for a time into a special discipline occupying an external position with reference to the soul. What can and ought to be realized to-day is not the re-establishment of religion on the privileged plane it occupied in primitive times, but *the raising of all planes of life to that higher level which religion alone has hitherto occupied*, by relating and linking to the spiritual substratum of life the forces which act on these other planes.'

This is true of philosophy and science as well as of politics, of art, and of every practical activity.

What does this demand amount to? To the spiritual reality in man being at last accepted by his consciousness exactly as it is, and in exactly the place which belongs to it in the hierarchy of the whole. Primitive states of consciousness have often satisfied the demand thus made. But what was lacking then was a correct view and a clear comprehension of the other, the non-spiritual, elements of the human being. Conversely in recent centuries man has accepted the revelation of Nature but rejected that of Spirit. Hence the lack of fulfilment and fullness characteristic of the modern world. More than ever then, the

question of fulfilment has to be asked afresh as the vital question *par excellence* from the point of view of human perfection. But this time there is no positive answer possible, except in the sense of a complete realization of integral being, which is at once mineral, vegetable, animal, sensitive, emotional, earthly and spiritual.

In truth, in the condition of Fulfilment which is to come, the division between Spirit and Earth characteristic of Christian consciousness will disappear. At the same time the water-tight partitions between sacred and secular life will disappear. The spiritual life will express itself through absolutely every manifestation. Then life in its entirety, while remaining on the earthly plane what it now is, will become the manifestation and witness of Spirit. Having its conscious centre thus remote from natural phenomena, maintaining itself in that relation of tension with them which corresponds to Spirit, man will become the artist pure and simple of life, the final conqueror and master accepted by the Gana. Not in the sense of a suppression or inhibition of this latter, but in the sense of its complete integration in a whole that is properly human. When he reaches this point man will lead a life wholly symbolic. It will no longer ever be facts which will decide in the last resort, it will be their spiritual significance, and this man will no longer disengage from what is real, he will enforce such significance upon reality. What this shifting of the accent of importance means I have said with all the clearness of which I am capable in the essay, 'On the Symbolic Life,' which appeared in No. 7 (1923) of the magazine of the School of Wisdom, *Der Weg zur Vollendung*; I could not, then, do better than reproduce it here.

'From the beginning of our era, Europe has known the symbolic life in the particular form of the sacramental life of the Church. In this case the symbolic life signifies that the man lives over again a path leading to salvation already traced out by Christ. By

the fact that the Christian, in the course of the religious year, shares in the rhythm of this path to salvation, that he opens himself to this rhythm and represents it for himself, by the fact that symbolically in this ritual he undergoes transformation from the natural to the supernatural, his whole earthly life becomes a symbol of what is eternal. But this process is not simply figurative nor simple dramatic imitation, because for Spirit the representation creates the reality, and because when we believe that a symbol is in conformity with reality, this very belief actually embodies in the life the rhythm of this symbol, so far as this rhythm is in conformity with it, according to the law of correlation of meaning and expression. To this extent, the symbolic life is *the* path which leads to the realization of significance. This same process which, in a religious community, is possible only by re-living the life of a spiritual guide, is unfolded in this guide in the shape of a life which is an exemplar: he lives "beforehand" what others will live again. It is in this last sense that every word, every action of Christ was a symbol. If he emphasized the letter (the law), while he never destroyed but fulfilled it (I am not come to destroy but to fulfil), it was from the standpoint of two truths: first that a new significance to express itself has no need at all of new letters, secondly that maintenance of continuity with the past is, in conformity with the law of inertia, the surest guarantee of continuance in the future.

'Now at the level of consciousness which is to-day beginning to decide the course of history, the duty of transforming one's life into a symbol is laid, without exception, on every one in the latter sense alone, in the Promethean sense as opposed to the Epimethean, that is to say, in the sense of a life which is an exemplar as opposed to that which is modelled on examples. No doubt each man can, so far as the history he embodies demands it, represent a traditional order *as well*, but

this latter will henceforward signify for him only a strengthening of the foundation or building material. For when it is a case of in-forming the dead letter of tradition with a new and deeper meaning, if that is the task imperatively laid upon us, each man, however humble he may be, ought to conceive his own personal life as a symbol valid for all ; so then everyone without exception is responsible for the smallest of his gestures and the most trifling of his words, by the same right as only the sons of God were of old. Meaning can be realized only by the conferring of meaning, and meaning can be conferred only by attributing to a fact a significance which it does not possess in its own right. It is this attribution which transforms the fact into a symbol, the event into a parable. Now the question arises : how can such a creative act be within the reach of ordinary mortals ? A Kantian formula, ambiguous in itself, will show us the path to the right reply. Kant defended the following fundamental moral maxim—I do not give the text but only the spirit of the passage : Let everyone always act in such a way that the maxim of his action can fitly be erected into a universal law. Kant personally started from the postulate of a rational order universally valid and in a way static, which we cannot admit because it does not exist. But the roots of Kant's thought went so deep that even his error here is the symbol of truth. His thought, then, will stand a change of body without its spirit being destroyed by it. So, then, Kant was perfectly right so far as he meant this : let each man make use of each given state of fact, each state acted or suffered, to express through it a deeper whole of significance. In inward experience, as in action, it is never the " what," the object, which is decisive, but only the " who " and the " how," the modality and the subject as co-ordinates of the inward spiritual attitude : if this is so, there is absolutely no limit to the realization of possible significance. He who knows, moreover, that

defeat and victory, viewed from the metaphysical centre, are equivalent values, because they mutually condition and demand each other as poles of the same field of forces, he who knows that no man, even the most powerful, is so free as to be able to call up the facts which are suited to him—in practice each man has to accept the greater part of facts as fate—this man can no longer doubt that *every man* has power to transform his outward life, however humble, into a symbol, and at the same time to link his whole existence to a deeper centre. He will understand likewise that, in this order of ideas also, the great spiritual guides of the past have lived “beforehand” for the rest : each word and each action of Jesus might, and ought to, become a symbol for absolutely every man. But to reach this point we must above all never forget this : considered according to its significance, it is the original alone which counts, never the copy. The importance of a word, an action, is measured exclusively by what in the given case it *really* signifies. That is why, at the level of consciousness attained by the vanguard of humanity, all imitation, even if it were imitation of God, stands for a direct sin against the Holy Ghost. The awakened man has no right to anything but what *corresponds* to him.’

To attain to Fulfilment, then, it is a question of first of all accepting all the elements and events of life just as they are, without excluding or ignoring anything. Then the task is from the standpoint of Spirit to mould all this immense wealth bestowed upon each man, as the artist shapes his matter. It is a question of living in this way, on the plane of the art of life, a purely symbolic life, in which the facts as such do not count, and the significance is everything. Now what is the specific function—to make use of a term which is unfortunately only approximative—which binds the whole of life to its spiritual substratum ? It is that which from all time has been called sanctifica-



tion or consecration. In the chapter 'Marriage' of *Problems of Personal Life* I have shown that marriage belongs to the spiritual order, and that it is created by consecration alone. In the same sense the whole of human life may be consecrated. The consecration of the future will no longer be a special consecration but a universal one, and sanctification will no longer lead to the specific state of sanctity (sainthood) : all nature will be raised to that highest level which, in religion, constitutes sanctity.

**I** DARE NOT INSIST FURTHER. FOR IT IS HERE NOT A question of putting forward or accepting a more or less plausible theory, but of reaching a concrete state, and it would be the height of arrogance in a philosopher to claim to do more than set up certain landmarks to mark the road to follow, or even simple finger-posts giving the general direction. In *La Révolution mondiale* I have shown that humanity is at present going through a crisis so profound that it may lead to an actual mutation, not physiological this time, but psychological. On the other hand a mutation is indispensable for whosoever wishes to attain fulfilment in that new state characteristic of the new man, who is at present in his embryonic stage or coming to birth ; every embryonic stage being ugly and imperfect, what is more natural than that for the moment we should perceive less perfection, less harmony, and less fullness than perhaps ever before ? But on the other hand, *if* the mutation is taking place in the direction demanded by the postulate of a development upward, *if* it is becoming the basis of departure for a new synthesis of the different forces which dwell in man, then for the first time in human history the possibility will be created of an integral fulfilment. This necessary change could be called forth only by a concrete personal experience

accepted in accordance with the imperative of the greatest possible openness to the world. For this reason it is in the attitude of blind faith rather than of critical examination that man, in this preliminary stage, will advance in the right direction. An attitude of faith, which accepts everything, hazards everything, gives up all security, especially that most deadly security of all which lies in plausible explanation blindly accepted—this attitude has been mine throughout my development. It is to this alone I owe the little progress I have made and the final knowledge which represents the precipitate of it. In 1926, as an Epilogue to *The Recovery of Truth*, I wrote an essay entitled: 'My own Belief'; I reproduce a considerable part of it here, because this confession of faith will explain, better than any theoretical dissertation, what advice I think I can give concerning the road to be followed.

'I do not believe that what any man, even the most gifted, thinks with his intellect about the problems of Being, has, from the standpoint of knowledge even the most infinitesimal value: the one and only thing of value is the real relation between the true self and the real object, expressed according to the law of correlation of meaning and expression, and so rendered transmissible. In this respect the thoughts of any novelist who is depicting himself and has a real talent for expression, may very well be of greater interest than the clever ideas of the cleverest learned man. But even they are but relatively important: the only thoughts which really interest others are those which embody not opinions but inward realizations, provided their author presents them with an inward fullness and force which make him as trustworthy as normal unimpaired eyesight is, when it reflects the outer world in a way valid for every man. Such genuine realizations infallibly approve their genuineness by the effects which they produce: if not at once, then with all the greater

certainty for the delay. No truth which transcends the plane of experience accessible to the average man has been proved with the objective certainty which experimental Science and Logic demand : it never can be. But however incapable of proof a truth may be, it approves its quality by the effect it produces, provided that on the plane of expression it is so formulated that it fully complies with the laws of Nature. To begin with, its truth appears self-evident to those who have by nature an affinity to the problem it resolves, and are psychologically so organized that they comprehend the wording from the very first. Moreover, a really happy formulation of a thought renders him who assimilates it capable of reproducing the meaning conveyed by it on his own initiative, provided only that this meaning was latent in him beforehand. Finally, genuine knowledge has an elevating effect on the subject. It in-forms life with a new significance, and the more positive and profound such significance is, the greater its quickening power.

‘But no man has ever found a universally valid expression for a truth unless he was inwardly accredited to it. It is on these credentials that everything depends. The ear will never see, the nose will never hear. The intellect *per se* is competent only in the domain of formal logic ; it cannot judge what is real and what is not. So, from my childhood, the mere fact that opinions were rational was never enough to make me take them seriously. If I had to listen to, or read, any author, and it was a question of anything more than entertainment, I always began by asking myself : Does this man really see more deeply than I do, in the same sense as the hawk sees farther than the owl ? If the answer was Yes, then I gave myself up to him. If not, then I declined to trouble any more about him. And when I yielded as an experiment, I never had to wait long before knowing if it was really worth the trouble. For when I open myself inwardly to the

influence of another, it straightway takes possession of my soul, and never fails to produce the effect which is in conformity with its nature. If a man is inwardly accredited from and to the truth he represents, I feel it at once by a transformation in myself. If he has not the plenary powers necessary, no matter how great his intelligence and ability otherwise, he is powerless to influence me.

‘ But from what I have just explained it by no means follows that I have had fewer masters than most men : I have had more. For if I do not feel I owe any debt of gratitude to those who merely possess opinions, I owe one to every man who has touched me nearly, and who has been, in any positive direction whatsoever, unlike myself. And this applies to almost all of them. Each time that I have opened my soul to one who differed from me, I have shared for a time in his very being ; and thus each time have grown to transcend my previous state.

‘ It follows that the only value in which I unfeignedly believe is genuineness. Not indeed assuredly in the sense of a judgment of absolute value, like those which criticasters devoid of all substantial personal worth are so ready to pronounce : I never allow myself to judge in this sense. The criminal and even the swindler may be just as genuine as the loftiest soul, if only they give themselves out to be what they really are. I judge only in the following sense : each man being fully empowered only to represent the real relation between himself as subject and the real object which affects him, expressed in accordance with the law of correlation of meaning and expression—does he express this real relation, and nothing but this relation ?

‘ Now the reality of this relation is measured by the action it exerts not only in an outward but also in an inward direction. In the latter it expresses itself in the shape of *primary belief*. Belief represents the final psychological court of appeal on the relation between

all life as reflected in representation and the not-Self, because it alone affirms the existence of this latter ; Belief is thus the subjective correlate of Being. Doubtless one need not believe in order to experience, and where the reality of the experience is doubted by no one, as in the case of the external world, Belief is of no importance. For the same cause it is supremely important in the domain of inward experience. This exists for one person alone and other men behave as if it were non-existent. So all inward reality, where it really means anything to the subject concerned, affirms itself, in proportion to this significance, in the form of accentuated Belief. There is never any question in such Belief of an arbitrary act of will. It is just as impossible to believe in what does not exist in the inner world, as it is for anything non-existent to exercise a real influence on the outer world. The state of things here is exactly as I described it at the beginning of this train of thought ; the degree of primary Belief possible inwardly is proportional to the degree of real action possible outwardly. It is because this is so that the greatness of a mission has always invariably, from the very beginning of history, manifested itself as proportional to the power of faith in the man who was the vehicle of it. It is always the belief which has been the primary active force, it is always this which has enlisted sympathy, and so is, properly speaking, the decisive historical factor in every case. Of course the strength of the belief is no guarantee of the truth of an assertion from the point of view of knowledge. But the intensity of the faith corresponds invariably to the intensity of the experience of reality, however much the latter may be misinterpreted by it. This is true even in the case of the insane. Being insane, they cannot see the world otherwise than in a distorted perspective ; their madness is thus the genuine expression of a truth. And inasmuch as they affirm the authentic relation they bear to the external world they give proof of more

substantial being than does the man incapable of believing anything whatsoever in himself.

‘A man’s original primary belief may, without detriment to its genuineness, coincide with a traditional religious belief. But it may equally well be that a man cannot, without insincerity, adhere to any ready-made truth. This depends entirely on his *actual* position within the universe, on the part which the psychological collective plays in his consciousness on the one hand, and the purely individual moment on the other, on the natural dispositions which are dominant in him, the Spirit which determines him from within, and finally on the goal he sets before himself in Life. On this point all that can be affirmed generally is this: only the man in whose soul the psychological collective has primacy over the personal can, without being untrue to himself, profess allegiance to a truth set before him by tradition. At this point we have come back again to the problem of inward credentials. Such credentials are necessary even for adherence to a determinate religious belief. Not everyone can put the same questions to the same extent and in the same degree, indeed some men cannot with sincerity put them at all, *because not every question affects every man personally*. Many a man is genuinely interested only in science, or politics, or some particular person whom he loves. Now, from the standpoint of the perfection of the individual soul, it is clearly desirable that this should, at any rate, acknowledge on the authority of those who have more experience than it has, values from which it has not benefited by any personal relation. For there exists an objectively valid scale of actual values and the man who does not feel their reality is undeniably inferior. But it is a question here only of private concern. So far as *others* are concerned, both in a universal and objective sense, nothing ever counts but what is original and genuine, for only the genuine expression directly expresses its truth and can therefore create reality.

This is why from the first awakening of my faculty of comprehension I have recognized nothing as value save what is original and genuine. Never, in any essential direction, have I believed in an impersonal truth or value. It is from original personal understanding of what has just been explained that I have shaped my whole personal life. It is from, and on the basis of, that same understanding that I will now speak of my own strictly personal belief.

‘I am the conscious embodiment of one perfectly definite position in the universe, and no other. I am a unique being, endowed with certain determinate predispositions which I accept as given, as I accept every other being. It is no more for me to pronounce sentence on my original mode of being than it would be for me to condemn others in the same way : I did not make myself, I was given to myself. And if I ought to feel respect for others I owe it equally to myself. My nature is so constituted that only certain things and certain questions concern and affect me personally. And to these I can establish a genuine relation only in a determinate orientation and by means of certain functions on which, for me, the accent of vital importance is laid. Accordingly certain quite definite tasks are allotted to me, and these alone ; and I can believe, both within me and without, only in what I experience as genuinely personal. It is in this way that, ever since I have been capable of thinking, I believe first and foremost in myself as a Spirit essentially not of earth. Never, in spite of my overflowing vitality have I felt myself other than a stranger and a sojourner on earth, never have I felt I was identical with my body and my earthly soul. Even the joy and sorrow which otherwise I feel as intensely as any man alive, have never touched that innermost consciousness with which alone I ultimately identify myself. Accordingly I have never felt myself bound by earthly ties otherwise than as by outward trammels. But they chafe and weigh upon me

all the more. This is true in particular of my bondage to Nature's processes of "becoming and perishing." My attitude towards Death is peculiar. I think of it continually. I shudder at the idea of death, for it appears to me as absolutely contrary to sense. On the one hand I feel myself to be imperishable, on the other I perfectly understand that by far the greater part of the elements reflected by my consciousness belongs inseparably to the order of earthly things and will assuredly pass away. This involves for my consciousness a contradiction, all the more poignant because I have on the other hand a singularly vivid experience of the perishable side of life. As often as I turn my attention to the pictures on my inward eye, I have at bottom no consciousness of Time proper, but only consciousness of simultaneity. All that ever has been, all that I have ever experienced, stands up before me all at once, so vividly present that I could believe there was no such thing as utter destruction. And what thus confronts me is nearly always appalling. All the plights, all the states in which I have ever seen a man, all the words which, to my knowledge, he has ever spoken, are to me one simultaneous experience. And if the movement which I thus behold concentrated into a single image is one of decadence or destruction, as it so often is, then I find it hard not to turn shuddering away. . . . And yet at other times, over and over again, I yearn for death ; if not when awake, then at least in my dreams. Something within me, I know not what, awaits from death its final deliverance. My most secret being seems to rush towards it, radiant with joy, assured of its own immortality. It is because my deepest consciousness of Self reflects my Spirit alone. My body and my soul I feel primarily as mere means of expression. Already when I was only twenty I used, by preference, to call my body "my instrument," and my feelings "my inward surroundings."

'But the strangest thing is this : this Spirit which



alone I feel and recognize myself to be, I nevertheless do not know. Between it and my earthly nature there exists an essential incompatibility which hinders this nature from wholly grasping what I know. Never yet on one single occasion has my consciousness been able to reflect the essence and nature of my Spirit as clearly as my intellect with good right demands. Never yet have I had one moment of that comprehensive certainty which some Hindu sages, at any rate, have evidently attained. To religious certainty—in the ordinary sense of the word—I shall never attain ; my peculiar situation and constitution forbid it. So I do not even aspire to it, and never have so aspired. This is true to such a degree that I have not the slightest curiosity with regard to it. I have always in this order of ideas the feeling that my Unconscious has full knowledge, that no revelation would take me unawares, but that on the other hand I have no right to ask too many questions, nor under any circumstances whatever to take a decision based on blind belief. My Spirit, my deepest Self, aspires to create for itself a strictly personal body. This it can only succeed in doing if I accept nothing but what I have personally acquired, believe nothing but what I know from personal experience, represent nothing but what I really am at the given moment. Unconditional personal truthfulness is one of my Categorical Imperatives. Another inward imperative forbids me ever to stand still. For it is only through the medium of personal initiative that Spirit can manifest itself in this world of Becoming. The Ego itself is indeed nothing but a series of events : this is why Being can be realized only in creation. This explains why, even as a youth, while on the one hand I frankly accepted my nature with all its defects, I yet felt it an unconditional duty to make the utmost out of it that could be made, and saw in indolence the one sin against the Holy Spirit. Here comes in another belief which for me is a certainty. I feel myself

absolutely alone among men, for never yet have I found one whose centre of consciousness was situated precisely in the same place as my own. But in the depths of my being I know myself primarily to be one with all men, and this with such self-evident clearness that the question of freely disposing of myself literally never arises for me, as it does for the majority of other men. I feel my person primarily as organ of humanity, and, be it understood, as one organ among others. So my free volition is for me at one with what I feel to be my duty. I know primarily—and I knew it already when there was not as yet the least sign of my vocation—that I have on Earth an appointed mission to fulfil. But on the other hand, I pursue my task not as one who fulfils a duty, but as one who starts from a primary feeling of freedom. Spirit admits no obligation, no compulsion. For Spirit—and therefore for every man whose consciousness is rooted in Spirit—primary volition is at one with what those who are not conscious of Spirit feel at best as a duty dictated by their conscience. Thus I live in freedom, starting from a kind of obscure knowledge difficult to define. From an absolutely certain knowledge that I am essentially Spirit. From an absolutely certain knowledge of my vocation as an organ of humanity. And in spite of this, up to the present, without understanding clearly who I am.

‘Thus I come to the exact determination of my particular position in the world, as I really feel it, and as it is the object of my unshakable belief. I believe, I have said, in myself as a Spirit essentially not of earth. This Spirit directs and guides me from within. It is outside me from the standpoint of my consciousness of facts, and yet it is my veritable Self. It is this same Spirit which demands that I should believe in nothing, save what I know in the sense of earthly knowledge. The fate which has laid upon me this demand has not always been easy to bear, for even as a child I had a deep craving for reassurance and security, and since I

have become a man, and the ground-notes of my nature have begun to resound through my being and set the tone, I am inclined on all occasions to instantaneous decisions. In spite of this I believe that I have faithfully fulfilled my special destiny. Perhaps no man since Socrates has left so many questions (both his own and other people's), unanswered. Perhaps no one—despite all appearances to the contrary—has given proof of such capacity for patient waiting. And the results have shown me that I have not misunderstood the behest of my Spirit. From year to year new certainties have been granted to me. And each gain in certainty has also marked a further stage on the road to the realization of my Self. I am still very far from having reached the state I hope one day to attain, and this hope, given the great resistance which my nature opposes to my Spirit, will be fulfilled only if I have the good fortune to come to extreme old age. Even as “one who knows” too, I am, in my own eyes, only at the very beginning of my career. I still know infinitely less, especially about the ultimate realities, than the immense majority of men profess to do. I have not yet succeeded in forming a rounded metaphysical picture of the world which would correspond to my dim foreshadowings; I have as yet no definite religious conviction. I do not know in what sense exactly man is immortal. And where I do not know, my mission forbids me to believe. It *seems* to me that certain questions touching the Hereafter can find no answer, because they are stated only from the standpoint of the earthly organism, the bonds of which are loosed at death. But this, too, I do not know for certain. Even to-day I am on the whole but as one who has “foreshadowings” of ultimate Truth. All my philosophizing wells up from a source which my consciousness cannot yet fathom.

‘What is my goal? It is the realization of myself in every direction. I have no other aim in life.

I have no right, I have said, to believe anything save what I know in the sense of clear comprehension. I have no right, for such a renunciation alone will enable my Spirit to realize itself completely in the order of phenomena. But on the other hand because I know this I accept and endure my nescience with joy. In this respect my belief is not unlike certain forms of trust in God. Only I can bear much more uncertainty than the Calvinist does. I am entirely lacking in any need for security and assurance of a static kind. The will of the Spirit which rules me is my final court of appeal. Of course I am aware that, in an absolute sense, it is not the ultimate resort. If ever any man has had personal experience of the Higher Spiritual Powers which govern his destiny it is myself. Any other man in my place would *know* that he was impelled, guided and protected by a Divine Providence. But I personally will draw no inference from what I experience till I have really understood it. I know that this refusal to draw conclusions is for me the one way which leads to understanding and hence to the final realization of myself. My task is to go on experimenting without ever wearying.

‘I come now to the problem of my belief in my own special mission. Ever since I have been able to think I have seen myself, and later my work as well, in an historical perspective. This perspective is my birth-right. Certainly there are spirits whose activity is not in Time: it is they who in all ages help the individual farther on his way; it is they likewise for whom the historic as such plays no part, who appeal only to the unique man as a private individual. Now I, owing to my nature, if I devote my mind to earthly problems at all, can only view things in their historical connexion. It is to me self-evident that in this world which is subject to the norms of Becoming and Perishing, every phenomenon—and therefore every problem connected with phenomena—is determined in and by Time. It

is clear to me that, though ultimately all that is collective exists and comes into being for the sake of the individual, it is just the unique individuals who are the integrant parts of a spiritual system, the higher unity of which develops as an indivisible whole. This is why Man's life is subject not only to Time in general, but also and above all to the historic occasion. At a given moment there must be given impulses which appeal to all, just in order that the unique individual may make progress. Now it is a primary feeling for this historic occasion, this *καιρός*, which makes the man historically important. I primarily *live* history; I live historically just as primarily as other men live a private life. What is lacking in me is just the sense for what is merely private. I have long foreseen that I had a mission—every man has one of some kind—but what it was I knew not. To-day I know. I know likewise why by right of birth I had to know so little and might believe in nothing. My natural constitution makes it possible for me to try pure experiments upon my own soul, such as few men can allow themselves without danger. I can bear to lay myself completely open, to be absolutely devoid of prejudices, and to live without the slightest inward support of the kind which seems indispensable for the great majority of mankind. I have no religious convictions which could hinder me from giving free play to my thought and my soul. I have no moral ones either like Marcus Aurelius, no more am I a sceptic like La Rochefoucauld, for avowed scepticism means that the man has decided for uncertainty. But above all grace has been given to me to be strong enough always to disown yesterday, and to arise every morning *as one just born* (*quasi modo genitus*). Thus the Spirit which lives in me has a peculiar chance of success in creating a new body. It is after all to assure it the opportunity of creating this new body that I am a dweller on this Earth. My historical task is to prepare the way, by experimenting upon myself, for a

new general state of things. But each time only the detailed results of my experiments on myself are clear and accurate knowledge. It is by the fruits they bear that I recognize the nature of this hidden presence which from within still urges me on. What this presence is in itself, I still know not. As yet I have only the right to say that I believe in it. Assuredly nothing would be easier for me than to order my manifold experiences into a unitary theoretical system. I have, however, no right to proclaim anything which for me subjectively does not constitute a certainty. What I only "think" is not of the slightest importance.

'So, then, I am a believer and yet I do not believe in the same sense as other human beings do. My path leads to self-realization by way of self-creation. I am at once a man with a quest and one who is driven on. Called and empowered to see, I am yet blind. My native country is assuredly not on Earth. Where is it? I know not. Never yet have I had any vision, any religious or occult revelation such as others say has been vouchsafed to them. But when one day the veil is lifted from my eyes, it is not likely that I shall be taken unawares : for my Spirit has had knowledge of all things from of old.'

Will my readers now understand why I do not wish to say any more about Fulfilment? To conclude this book I will add only what follows :

If all realization of Spirit here below amounts to an imparting of Significance, and if every man instinctively admits that there exists a final Significance—however he personally may represent it—what, determined without any dogmatism, according to the pure spiritual intention which it incarnates, would be the ultimate meaning of this final Significance? It is what Plato used to call *The Idea of Good*. It is only possible to realize Spirit, as all experience proves, when we pursue the realization of absolute values recognized as such. Now the common

denominator of these values is not the idea of the True, nor is it that of the Beautiful, *for it is only on the basis of an ethical position of the problem of life* that the imperative to realize æsthetic and logical values is conceivable.<sup>1</sup> This state of things is nothing else but the logically necessary consequence of the fact that it is possible to realize Significance only by bestowing it upon what does not possess it. It is exclusively through the medium of the free choice of personality that supra-personal spiritual reality can manifest itself.

It is because this is so that goodwill and love are, in the eyes of Christianity, the highest virtues ; it is for this reason that these are the qualities which decide whether a man is saved or damned—and not truth or error, not æsthetic perfection or imperfection. Now it is evident that goodwill and love, if they express a positive and disinterested attitude towards others, stand for ways by which man succeeds in giving to events and to fate, whatever these may be in themselves, an ultimate positive Significance in the moral sense, that is to say in relation to the idea of the Good. These observations, brief as they are, make clear, as fully as is possible on this earth, the non-dogmatic and supra-confessional meaning of the word 'consecration.' *To consecrate this life means to give to all its manifestations an ultimate Significance which exists only from the standpoint of metaphysical and unconditioned Good.* So consciousness of uniqueness and that of communion with

<sup>1</sup> The last sentences are taken from *The Recovery of Truth*, page 467, of the German edition. They are followed by a development, which I am going to quote as a further explanation (it leads finally to a de-relativation of the ideas of Good and Evil). 'Just as on the natural plane it is his Ethos which makes the man, for his human state is indissolubly bound up with his capacity for self-determination, so in the same way it is his Ethos alone which raises him from the plane of nature to that of spiritual values. This fact alone is enough to explain why, for all men of all times, and for children, to whom it falls personally to create their own world, even more clearly than for grown-ups, the ethical problem has constituted, and still constitutes, the first and last problem. It is not the ethic which can be founded on any other base than an ethical one, it is, on the contrary, the reality of what all theoretic ethic endeavours with pains and difficulty to understand, which constitutes the basis of all spiritual life.'

all that exists are fused in the Spirit of Good. As soon as this fusion is begun, a mighty current of Holy Spirit bathes all that man does and all that he suffers, all that he wills and all that he renounces—a current which at its height sanctifies life *in its entirety*. Then the whole life becomes a sacrament in the same sense as marriage, the only sacrament among the forms of life in force to-day.

For the man who has attained this level, consecration is no longer a theoretical problem, but a practical one. It appears then that the whole era in which theory reigned supreme was nothing but a by-way. A by-way that was probably inevitable : in fact, this roundabout procedure of a preliminary externalization of what was innermost in man's life was necessary ; afterwards, a groping advance from this externalization, that man might succeed at last in realizing himself directly and under purely personal forms. But when man has once really attained to personal comprehension of Significance, he troubles no more about theoretical truths ; he is then interested in his spiritual perfection alone. To conclude this book, then, I will answer in a few words a question which has, it is true, nothing to do directly with the problem of fulfilment, but which, I feel sure, a very large number of my readers will certainly ask : the question of the ' hereafter ' and the ' beyond.' The answer to this question is as follows : the man who sees things and people as they really are and who completely admits this reality, not only knows how to answer more questions than could have been answered before, but also *there are many questions which he no longer asks*. The saying of Goethe's which I am fondest of quoting is this : ' It is extremely harmful to be always asking Why ? ' By this he meant : nearly all questions of this kind are asked without the smallest real interest in the thing itself ; they are asked only to avoid directly facing what is (since it is often painful), by taking refuge on the plane of theoretical grounds. When anyone, in a time of revolution, is ill-treated, all weak natures, that is to say, the immense majority of



mankind, first ask the question 'Why?' that they may in this way be exempted from com-*passion*, that is to say, from having to 'suffer with' the victim. And if they find out that the person concerned is ever so little to blame, the painful impression they have just received is thereby effaced. It might be thought perhaps that this is a special case : in reality the primary psychological ground of nearly all theodicies, of nearly all eschatologies, even of nearly all scientific systems is of no higher order. It must needs be either that everything has proceeded from the Good and leads to the best of all possible worlds, or else that everything has proceeded from what is already known and leads to what is already known. In both cases, for the man who recognizes such imperatives, all personal problems are done away with. On the contrary, one who really desires to understand asks very few questions, he even abstains as long as possible from all explanation : on the one hand he observes and contemplates, on the other he radiates his own nature. With bared breast and unbowed head he faces reality. Then, at length, inevitably he receives the revelation of the true and living relation between the world and himself. Then, if he desires to understand, the correct solution dawns upon him ; then his emotional nature vibrates, of its own accord, in right relation to other beings ; if he acts his will involuntarily takes the right direction, and inevitably he impresses his own original quality upon the outer world, in conformity with the spiritual force he embodies and the particular mode of its existence. In the noiseless work thus accomplished, it is hardly necessary that the man should consciously know what is happening. It is very seldom that great spirits clearly perceive the range of their own influence : they feel simply that 'virtue has gone out of' them. Now such force grows greater for every risk taken, every personal decision made, every victory gained by struggle, every sacrifice willingly offered. Jesus prayed to His Father to forgive those who crucified Him, saying : 'They know not what they do,'

but the same may be said of all those who have come to save the world : not one of them has really known what he did. Jesus embodied the spirit of truthfulness as no one ever did before Him. Now to-day we know, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the idea of His mission which He Himself had did not correspond in any way to what has proved to be His actual mission.

The farther a man advances along the road of fearless staking his all, of struggling with bared breast, of hazard-ing himself, the one and only road which leads to the goal, the more he becomes aware how many questions belong to the number of those 'idle words' for which men were threatened with the wrath of the Jehovah they dreaded. For life, as experienced, theoretical knowledge as such has no sort of direct usefulness. It is useful only when it represents either the expression of an inward light organically gained, and not a substitute (*Ersatz*) for such enlightenment, or else a starting-point in the same sense that a working hypothesis forms one. Only that knowledge is of use for life which opens wider the gates of understanding ; all knowledge which shuts them paralyses life, chokes it and strangles it.

This explains why from the statement of Socrates, who, unlike the other Athenians, professed that he knew nothing, exact science has issued. His everlasting questions were a proof of the very opposite of curiosity. For inward reasons very like those of Kant, he wished to build dykes against the flight of ideas to the mental disease of the same name. He wished to reach by the path of logic what Brahmin India was seeking to reach by a technique of meditation which consists essentially in a fixation of the attention. Confucius pursued it, too, never giving in his replies more than a small part of his thought, leaving his questioner to find out the rest for himself, and Buddha also pursued it when he preserved a strict silence, which his hearers could not fail to notice, upon certain problems. In the last analysis, we may even assert that the irrational character, so clearly marked, of

some dogmas of the Christian Church answers the same purpose : questions *ought not* to be asked beyond a certain point. In fact, this is a universal law, and one which is particularly difficult for a man of the scholarly type to comprehend : it is the man who desires to understand, but who is at the same time forbidden to ask questions, who will most easily discover the one and only path leading to the solution of the problem he is inwardly stating—a problem generally very different from the one stated by his intellect. This one and only path is that of experimenting for himself and on himself. Just as, with reference to external Nature, man attains, so far as he himself is concerned, to exact knowledge only by allowing one reality to react upon another. The real transformations which result from this process are the answers required. Answers which are merely theoretical are of no importance whatever for life.

If now we try to settle in this way what it is our desire really aims at, we reach a statement which shows astonishingly little agreement with all intellectual prejudices. To begin with we really desire to know far fewer things than would generally be admitted. We never really want to know exactly what is going to happen ; every conjunction of stars favourable to prophets, either genuine or supposed, has taken place at epochs when life was unbearable for the majority of men, and so drove them to take refuge in the future. This explains why the non-fulfilment of predictions does not really worry those who give credence to them, and why prophecies of evil have seldom affected the prophets' disciples more unpleasantly than comforting ones would do. It is probable that what we call the past and the future have no real existence. But man is so constituted that the melody of his life is only fulfilled for him if everything happens at its proper time,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the development of this idea in *Problems of Personal Life*. I cannot refrain from reproducing in this context a very fine passage from a letter which Maurice Delamain wrote to me on the occasion of my fifty-seventh birthday : ' Of course you are not old at fifty-seven. And I do not feel old

if no event is forestalled, and nothing is out of place in retrospect, or absent in present experiences ; and this implies that each moment is, and must be—a surprise. If the moment thus comes as a surprise then man can endure even the most appalling horrors. But the essential point is this : then only can he be master of his fate, when he has strength to endure it. Thus in imminent danger of actual death no man knows any fear of death so long as he can defend himself. Conversely, whoever is endowed with memory can judge from his own experience what grace was showered upon him at birth when he was permitted to be ignorant of the future : he would not have known the wonderful shock of any of the great joys which were granted him. As for the hard and grievous ills he was fated to undergo, could he ever have borne to look forward to them without collapsing ?

If we look at things from this standpoint, what the English call ‘rising to an emergency’ appears as the primary phenomenon of original life. And all life, when not deformed and distorted, struggles against being deprived of this primary manifestation. It is for this reason that children rightly refuse to profit by their parents’ experience except to a certain very limited extent. In the same way death too *ought* to come upon us as a surprise ; the horrible thing in capital punishment is that death in this case is fixed for an exact time and carried out mechanically. In the same way, finally, we *ought* not to know anything certain about the Hereafter. It is probable—as I have already said—that all the answers that have been given and that are being given, as to the question of what is beyond the threshold of death are false, for the simple reason that they are given from the standpoint of the brain alone, and there is no such thing

at fifty-four, which is nearly the same age. We are better than young—our age is more exciting, perhaps, than youth. If you like to put it so, we are the youth of old age : supreme realizations, which we should never wish for, are going to raise us, in spite of ourselves, above life. We are, as it were, facing the revelation of a new Love, of which we are afraid, and yet it alone will bring us to Fulfilment.’

as a brain without a body. But however that may be : no one, in the depths of his heart, desires to know exactly what will happen hereafter. The real significance of nearly all ' Books of the Dead '—of which the Thibetan one is the most striking—does not lie in the fact that they give information or throw fresh light, but that they recommend rules of conduct. Among all types of men it is probably only the theosophists, the most superficial of all those who aspire to knowledge, who have any real curiosity about the Hereafter. Every profound man whose forces are well balanced, has always shown by his attitude and conduct that the thing of vital importance about death is to be prepared for the surprise. Whether they were ready or full of apprehension, they never, at bottom, when faced with death, thought of anything but how to set their life in order before the end, so that their whole being might be ready for an experience which was not and could not be foreseen. This is the meaning of the symbol of the white shroud in which the dead are clothed on earth, and in which, according to numerous religions, the soul is likewise clothed when it has left its fleshy wrapping. This likewise is what is meant by the command that we must *believe* in immortality, and also by the invariable repugnance of all religious natures to any attempt to settle the question by scientific experiments. As for the content of the belief, it may be said of the majority of profound minds which confess a positive belief in the Hereafter : they fix their superficial consciousness in a determinate attitude that their creative Unconscious may thus, without being chafed by any trammels, prepare for the hazard of a new life, as the musical character of all life demands.

To understand the significance of life more deeply does not, then, necessarily mean to know more facts about it : it means, in many a case of supreme importance, to decline to ask questions, deliberately to run more risks, and to look forward less. The craving for knowledge has for some time grown far beyond the limits which are

natural for it. What seriously concerns us in the Here-after is obviously not book-knowledge about it, but a living, lived and lively experience of it. What lives here on earth is the man as a whole. That the man as a whole likewise perishes appears to me exceedingly improbable. But however this may be in the last resort : it is only from the starting-point of the living integral man, and with this integral nature as an end, that problems of knowledge are also problems of existence. And if we know to-day that by far the greater part of man's inner life takes place in the Unconscious, and that it is fatal to expose to the light what grows and thrives in the dark, we ought to know likewise that it is in conformity with the significance of life that we are in utter darkness as to what death, at bottom, signifies. That it is anything essential, or even the event pregnant with ultimate gravity which it seems to the distressed relatives of the departed, is extremely improbable. If it were so, warriors would not rush upon it as if it were a matter of course : nor would their mothers and their brides find it so natural that they should run to meet death. If it were so, a death in conformity with Significance could not be felt to be the final completion of Fulfilment on earth. If it were so, it would not be recognized as self-evident by every profound Spirit that there are values which are higher than life ; and such expressions as ' to quit one's life,' ' to give one's life ' would never have come into use. Most of all, if it were so, the fact that a man believes or does not believe in personal immortality would not be so utterly unimportant for life. For spirits, profound in the metaphysical sense, who did not believe in the continuance of personal existence, have died as serene and satisfied as others, equally profound, who died in the steadfast belief in Immortality.

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The trouble lies in Man's superficiality; his very language bears witness to this, and he speaks habitually of *many-sided* life and activity, as if he were talking of the facets of a diamond. But human nature, like the earth itself, is not a matter of surfaces but of strata—the strata of external experience, of moral and æsthetic apprehension, of reflective consciousness, and finally of religious experience, the core and centre of Man's being, in which he strives to set himself in direct relation to the All. And life is potentially a fusion of these strata—Life rich, harmonious, full.

And the way to such re-integration is the subject of this book. The path to be trodden is the path of Sincerity, of Loneliness, and of Suffering; but it is also the highway to Freedom and to Fullness—for "there are no discernible limits to the higher development of spirit and of soul, nor are there any bounds to the deepening of personality".

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boredom grows on it like a mask'. His body is no longer pliable and slender; heavy-set and bulky now, it has lost the quickness of its movements. 'I'm getting fat, and I'm afraid I shall get fatter still', he says to Lucien. . . ."

Dr. Boris Sokoloff, who is the author of over a hundred publications on Cancer, was appointed Professor of Experimental Medicine at St. Petersburg University at the age of twenty-two. A few years later, he was Head of the Department of Experimental Medicine at Lesgaft University, and after leaving Russia worked at the Pasteur Institutes in Paris and Brussels.

In 1930, Dr. Sokoloff went to America as a guest of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, and is at present associated with the International Cancer Prophylactic Institute.

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despair of Christmas, 1929, Londoners passed through a period which has come to seem unique in their history. Shocks and freaks, scandals, crazes and crimes, succeeded one another with bewildering rapidity.

We speak now, with an incredulous shrug of the shoulders, of the "post-war epoch", much as we speak of the "naughty 'nineties". It is an epoch that has passed for ever, with its peculiar, never-to-be-repeated doubts and hopes and fears, clowns and villains, fashions and follies. It is dead, yet continues to live with the strange and exhilarating vivacity of a dream. For we have moved out of that naïve and flashing world into conditions at once duller and more menacing. To leave a lunatic asylum for a prison, like waking with a headache "after the party", invests the memory with a glamour that may be fictitious but is unquestionably dazzling.

This book explores the quasi-fairyland of those hectic days, touching upon domestic and foreign politics from Lloyd George to Baldwin, social sensations from Sir Oliver Lodge's view of heaven to Sir Leo Money's view of police-constables in Hyde Park, scientific inventions, like radio and the sound-film, that transformed society, ethical and æsthetic iconoclasts only less grotesque in ideas and behaviour than their censors. In short, the carpenters of this "Doubting Castle" scale the heights and plumb the depths of wild years that will never come again.

Much that is recalled in these pages will seem a nightmare to the modern reader, much intensely romantic, much merely laughable. The subject-matter of the scenario is exciting, unfamiliar and, if you care to draw the moral which is only implied, yet never stated, by the author, unobtrusively instructive.

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The author met Bela Kun in the University City of Klausenburg, Transylvania, long before the world struggle flung the future dictator at the footstool of Lenin. He was in Budapest when Bela Kun seized control, and not only met the majority of the members of the "People's Government" but also witnessed the hopeless state of chaos to which they rapidly reduced the country.

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